

TO EDUCATE AND EQUIP LAITY IN THE
CHURCH TO MINISTER TO VICTIMS
OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Sheila Brown, D.Min.

B.A. Spring Arbor University, 1996
M.A. Ashland Theological University, 2003

Mentor

Linda E. Thomas, Ph.D.
Robert C. Walker, D.Min.

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ABSTRACT
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By

Sheila Brown

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Mentor

Linda E. Thomas, Ph.D.

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The context of this ministry model was Praise Chapel Church of God in Westland, Michigan. The focus of this project was to train laity in the church to minister to victims of domestic violence. The objectives were to break the silence in the church, to equip people to minister to victims of domestic violence, and to help victims make transformations in their lives. The methodology employed was qualitative research, including pre and post questionnaires, surveys, and women telling their stories. The finding was that the church, as a community of believers, can offer support to victims of domestic violence

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DEDICATION

I write this to my daughters and grandchildren in order to leave a legacy of my life experiences and the challenges that have impacted my life. My parents, children, sister, brother, and grandchildren are such an important part of my history of old stories and new beginnings. I am thankful that, regardless of what happens, Jesus Christ is Lord of my life. Our past is shaping our future. Our roads have been those less traveled by many; yet the accomplishments have been great. Many people have greatly influenced my life, yet it has been the love I have for my family that has given me the courage to continue striving to overcome the obstacles that life has set before me. May the love of God be the wind that pushes us to finish the race that is set before us. Find relationships that are fulfilling. Learn to look far beneath the surface. Never let what is overwhelming one day prevent you from facing life's challenge the next. Accept our callings and be assured that He who has called us is Faithful.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------|---------------------------|
| DV | Domestic Violence |
| PPO | Personal Protection Order |
| NT | New Testament |
| OT | Old Testament |
| KJV | King James Version |
| NIV | New International Version |
| NKJV | New King James Version |

WE ARE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more. (Psalm 10:17-18 NIV)

A very effective way of fulfilling this verse is to put on the mind of Christ, hear the desire of the afflicted, encourage them of their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ and offer them the Lord's house as a place of refuge where there is peace and not terror.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence has been a part of this writer's journey as far off as she can remember. As a young child, this writer found herself terrified in the mist of domestic disputes. This writer remembers trying extremely hard not to bring attention to herself to prevent being the cause of anything that might have a violent outcome. In this writer's extended family of relatives, there was violence in domestic relationships as well as in the community. Violence has been so much a part of the American way of life. This writer really did not give it much thought until it was close to home and she determined to keep it far from her personal life as possible.

This writer did not think she would be the one to address what should be the churches' response to domestic violence. This did not become a passion for the writer until the Lord inspired the desire. In retrospect, this writer is amazed as to how the Lord prepared her for this journey. Before this, there was never any consideration of her involvement in the church one way or another; there was no reason to consider areas where there was not involvement. Yet, when this writer began to critically review interest in social justice and the roots in history that have endeavored to pluck up the bands of oppression, she found the God of justice. The God of justice was found in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, one can read in Zec 7: 9-10,

Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, do not oppress the widow,

the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart.¹

The spirit of Deuteronomy agrees with Zechariah on being merciful and gracious toward the downtrodden²

He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. (Deut 10:18)

Justice is also found in the New Testament. In the song of Mary one can see the Messiah as a worker of justice:

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away." (Luke 1:46-53)

Dr. Andrew Park made an interesting comment pertaining to this scripture "In the Messiah's presence, the lowly and the poor would be lifted up, while the rich and the powerful would undergo a fall. These passages indicate that it is not religious, but rather social and political changes that set the agenda for the messianic tasks. In line with the spirit of the Hebrew Bible, he cared for the well being of the poor, the sick, the widows, and the aliens. Jesus' mission focused on justice for the oppressed, not the justification of the oppressor."² In our churches, many have found that we are always ready to tell those who have sinned that there is a Savior to forgive their sins and rightly so, yet we

¹ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). All Scripture citations are taken from this version unless otherwise noted.

² Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing, A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004).

sometimes neglect to reach out to those who have been wounded by the sinner and tell them that there is a Healer and a Deliverer, the Messiah, Who came to set the captives free.

This justice is for the wounded. The church has not always taken a stand on injustice for victims of domestic violence. This ministry model is not so much about justice; rather it is ministering to those who have suffered injustice. In order to bring this point of view into focus, one must first look at domestic violence as a form of injustice and, as a result, there is a need to minister to those who are oppressed because of this injustice in their lives.

To address this injustice, and because of the suffering of those who have endured the oppression of injustice, this writer has undertaken a project that will attempt to alleviate the weight of injustice by focusing on the recommended response of the church who are ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The objective of this project is to break the silence in the church, develop a model to help the church educate and equip laity to minister to victims of domestic violence.

My hypothesis for the project is:

How can I improve the different cultural communications with the respect for the differences in people, by focusing on the issue of ministering to victims of domestic violence, are to break down some barriers that have limited the involvement of the church in this area, in an attempt to make disciples and improve the community

The foundations for this project are as follows (1) the Bible is in support of ministering to those who have been oppressed and held in terror, (2) the history and cultural conditions that have allowed domestic violence to continue throughout time, and (3) theologically, ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ have been called to minister to not just sinners but also those who have been sinned against. (These issues are dealt with in

detail in Chapter Three.) This writer is reminded that throughout history there have always been those who have utilized theology to fit their lives instead of fitting their lives to the theology of Jesus Christ.

To test this hypothesis this writer, (1) had surveys completed by a group of ladies who are facing their challenges in life, (2) completed eight sessions of training with pre and post questionnaires, and (3) had women tell their stories about their domestic violence experiences. The ministry model will be further explored within the following chapters.

Chapter One will define the area of ministry the Ministry of Excellence Model will be addressing by training laity in the church to minister to victims of domestic violence, why this type of ministry was chosen and what special insights this writer brings to the context of this ministry. Chapter Two will address the State of the Art in this Ministry Model by reviewing historical as well as current literature to determine how it relates to the writer's ministry model. Citations from pertinent work in the area of ministering to victims of domestic violence will be reviewed along with what changes are needing to be made. Chapter Three will visit the initial roots established in biblical, historical, and theological foundations concerning victims of domestic violence as well as the response of the churches in history. Chapter Four will describe the methodology, the project's beginning, data collecting instruments, design of the ministry model, research method, and how the data was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. In Chapter Five, the details of the field experiences will describe how the model was implemented, evaluated, and analyzed for its ability to yield results in proving the hypothesis. In Chapter Six, the writer will summarize the results, provide reflections and conclusions.

The area of focus of the peer group is intracultural communications and urban development. The "Urban Development and Intercultural communications Focus Group"

educated leaders to design, implement, and evaluate policies to solve pressing issues of social and political change, and to understand culture and how it is affected by communicative systems. The training for laity in the church to minister to victims of domestic violence is an urban project where the communication is intracultural because it may be able to break down a wall of silence in the church and hopefully open the doors of communication that will help in this area of ministry for the churches as well as the community. The communication process has been enhanced as a result of this project because more people became aware of this issue. This is a community project because there is no community that lacks violence. Violence is found to be more prevalent in the urban areas where there are other social factors to contribute to violence as a whole. We begin the paper by explaining the ministry focus.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The area of ministry that is being addressed in this paper is educating and equipping laity in the church to minister to victims of domestic violence. The primary context of this paper is Praise Chapel Church of God in Westland, Michigan. This church is affiliated with Church of God out of Cleveland, Tennessee. This church was not always known as Praise Chapel Church of God. It was once called Plymouth Church of God. Plymouth Church of God was incorporated on April 27, 1962, as a Michigan nonprofit organization. The residing pastor was Reverend Floyd Henderson.

In March of 1973, the church relocated to the downtown Plymouth area (585 N. Mill Street). The downtown Plymouth area was a quaint old town village. Most parishioners were from the Plymouth/Canton area. Reverend Charles Ritchey assumed the pastoral role once the church relocated. In January 1987 Pastor Trusty was appointed to pastor the Plymouth Church of God. In March of 1988 Pastor Trusty changed the name from Plymouth Church of God to Praise Chapel Church of God. Pastor Trusty resigned in 1990. God sent Pastor Ronald Schubert, former Praise Chapel Youth Pastor, who was pastoring in Seymour Indiana. Although there were times when it seemed as though Praise Chapel Church of God was going to fold, Pastor Schubert, now Bishop Schubert, believed that God had called him to pastor this church. He continued to pastor at times without

receiving a paycheck. As a result the church now has approximately 200 members and usually meets budget.

The power structure at Praise Chapel Church of God is congregational and episcopal. The pastor is the leader of the church; however, the elders are the ones who control events in the church. Although the pastor is recognized as the leader of our church, he is assisted by Associate Director, Cindy Goins, who helps in equipping others. Much of the ministry management falls under her. Cindy Goins is responsible for the order of service, overseeing the children's classes and bringing order to all the services and events in the church. Our mission statement has a slogan that Bishop Schubert has composed: "Our Mission is His Message." Our mission statement reads as follows:

In Matthew 28, Jesus gave His final instructions before He ascended into heaven. These words would be His most important, heartfelt thoughts; His last charge to motivate the troops. He said . . . All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of age: verses 18-20. Jesus challenged us to live a life of personal evangelism, He commanded us to make disciples, and he commissioned us to teach His Word for spiritual maturity and growth.

The church believes that the Bible is God's unique revelation to people. It is the inspired, infallible Word of God, and the supreme and final authority on all matters upon which it teaches. No other writings are vested with such divine authority. There is only one God, creator of heaven and earth, who exists eternally as three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each fully God yet each personally distinct from the other. All people are created in God's image and matter deeply to God. Central to the message of the Bible is that God loves people, and invites them to live in communion with God and in community with each other. All believers are members of the body of Christ, the one true church

universal. Spiritual unity is to be expressed among Christians by acceptance and love of one another across ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, national, generational, gender, and denominational lines.

The Writer's Spiritual Journey

This writer was born in Detroit, Michigan on August 28, 1955. She was the third child of four born to Carmel and Bettie Brown. She was not raised in the church, as her parents did not often go to church. Her uncle took her to church as a child, introduced her to Jesus and baptized her. His name is Rev. James Brewer. His spiritual journey just ended in June, 2005. This writer wonders if she told him enough times how grateful she is for the spiritual father he was to her.

There were not a lot of childhood memories where family violence was not present. It was in this writer's home, her uncle's home, across the street at a neighbor's house and, of course, it always found its way back to her house. Not just in the house, but many nights this writer remembers crying in the car with siblings because the car had been stopped so the father could fight the mother. She still remembers her mom begging her dad to stop. Both parents were from the south, which this writer believes was a significant factor in why the mother did not leave the father. There were no close relatives and the mother could not drive.

This writer remembers praying as a child that God would not let her father find them when they would run somewhere to hide. The father usually did not find them but now she is not so sure if it was an answer to prayer or the father being too ashamed to go to the neighbor's houses to ask for his wife and children. Usually the wife and children would be gone for the night, and then they would sneak, tiptoeing, back into the house the

next day, so they would not wake her father as he slept off his drunken state. Most of the family's energy was engulfed in the dysfunctional behavior of the father's drinking. Feeling rejected this writer began looking outside of her home for a "place." This led to meeting and becoming connected with rebellious friends. These friends led her into using drugs at a young age. Using drugs led to criminal activities, which led to prison.

Prison became another cycle, although there were some positive areas, such as pursuing an education and office skills. Some positive people like Chaplains and instructors took an interest in this writer. Yet returning to society, she went back to the life of crime and abusive relationships. In August 1992 in the county jail, this writer was too angry and hurt for anyone to talk to. It was then that the Lord sent the Holy Spirit into the cell and she experienced salvation. She still went to prison, but while locked up she also found freedom. This writer worked for Spring Arbor University while incarcerated and earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree. She was led by the Lord to go to Life Challenge of Southeastern Michigan, then called Teen Challenge, for a year to be discipled.

After her release from prison and completing Life Challenge, this writer began to work at a Staffing Agency as a Personnel Coordinator while pursuing a master's degree in Pastoral Counseling. Eventually she was promoted into management. For six years this Staffing Agency became a breaking ground of ministry. Most of the individuals who entered the agency needed more than a job. Liberty was given for this writer to teach the Word of God and to pray with the individuals who came into the agency. The manager and other staff members were also Christians. This allowed the writer to work and be in fellowship with a small community of believers every day. From there, she was led to United Theological Seminary to begin a terminal degree. The Lord then revealed to her the direction of domestic violence, reminding her that her house had been a safe house for

other and the safe house she provided would be one of many. Prior to coming to United Theological Seminary, this writer had housed a woman and two children for five months because of domestic violence in the home.

In 1994, this writer conducted a research project at Scott Correctional Facility and titled the findings "Sexual Abuse Can Be Linked to Women in Prison." After surveying one-fifth of the prison population, it was found that women who are already accustomed to living with feelings of shame will continue to accept abuse. For most, the only reinforcement of attention they have received in life is from a negative aspect. They will put themselves in a position to continue to receive it. Usually in their criminal activities, there will be a man involved exploiting them yet again. This criminal activity leads many women to prison where counseling will only occur if the woman is not able to function in the prison population and may not be available even if the woman is not able to function within the prison population. Most women adapt; therefore no counseling is received. Most victims experience abuse more than once. This abuse usually by someone the victim knows. Women who are victims of sexual abuse will normally not seek healthy relationships. This research showed that most women who are sexually abused as a child will pick partners who will abuse them if not sexually then mentally and/or emotionally. Many will not stay in long-term relationships. Those who do, usually find the abuse gets progressively worse. Many have nightmares and fears. Some become so helpless that suicide is seen as the only way out. This writer has learned that resolving issues of pain is the pathway to healing. Traveling this journey for self and others led this writer to her context of ministry.

This writer's passion to help others disengage from the domestic violence stems from past experiences and from experiencing inner healing. The desire is to continuously

see others free from the destructive acts of violence. When considering the violence in formative years, and the behavior learned to accept and act out, this writer wonders what the course of her life may have been had there been some intervention. This writer believes that environment played an important role in her life direction. Some may rationalize even from a biblical point of view that it was destiny to experience everything that happened. Yet even though the Lord knew the steps this writer would take that led through wilderness experiences in her life, Jesus was able to bring good out of those bad experiences.

There is Jacob in the Bible. Jacob's past of being a deceiver and trickster did not stop him from wrestling with the angel of God for a blessing.¹ Jacob wrestled with who he was and his past situations; as a result he became a changed man. Consequently, because his life changed, he was then able to effect change in others.

When this writer reflects on other ways she could have responded to violence, she realizes there were alternatives. She could have become a police officer. This may have given her the opportunity to be a peacemaker or perhaps enabled her to legally respond with violence. This could have possibly put her in the position of having the opportunity to prosecute offenders. This writer does not believe that sending the offender to jail will, in itself, heal the victims. In hopes of cultivating social change, she could have gone into the field of social work. Yet, because she believed that domestic violence is also a spiritual matter, there would have been limited ways she could, and could not, help the victims as well as the offenders. All of these fields can of course become a part of the solution. Yet for true synergy to take place the sum must be greater than the parts. This writer believes

¹ Genesis 32:24–30

the church, the police department, the courts, and the social agencies will be greater working in unity than as separate entities.

This writer is presently the Pastoral Counselor and one of the teachers at Praise Chapel Church of God. Her context in teaching is helping others to take the word of God and apply it to their lives. In the context of counseling, she engages with many people in many different dimensions. These dimensions range from giving referrals to inner healing prayer sessions. As a Pastoral Counselor, she leads small groups studying scripture to address a particular issue in their lives. Most of the people to whom she ministers have been involved in domestic violence in some fashion.

Domestic violence is a vicious cycle that usually continues or ends in prison or death. There is an emotional attachment that keeps the couple together even when both partners claim they do not want to continue to be together. When there are children involved, more dynamics exist. Many victims and perpetrators have learned this behavior as children and now pass this behavior on to another generation. As a Pastoral Counselor, this writer has come to realize that there are many issues of the soul that need to be addressed. If the church focused on a ministry to help people disengage from the violence and/or the violent offender, it would save lives first and foremost. It would save on prison cost, police calls etc. Much more than all that has been mentioned for one to go from brokenness to wholeness cannot be measured by costs.

This writer now works at Life Challenge of Southeastern Michigan, which involves working with women from the inner cities, as well as the suburbs, who have been wounded in the worst ways. Life Challenge is a Christian Growth Center for men and women who have been challenged with drugs, alcohol, depression, abuse and many other issues. It is a year-long program that is Christ-centered in teaching and preaching the word

of God to make disciples for the Kingdom of God. This writer's focus on urban development and intercultural communications has helped her to direct her time and energy where it is most profitable for these women. This writer ministers the gospel of Jesus Christ with all who come into this program. Life Challenge receives women from all across the United States and many from various jails and prisons. With different races, ages, and demographics involved in the program, this writer must be able to communicate with each of them and be relational to their needs.

The major portion of this paper addresses the need for victims of domestic violence to be ministered to in all churches. The objective of this paper is to develop a model to educate and equip churches to minister to victims of domestic violence. This will empower the churches to not only reach more hurting people in their church, but also in their communities. This writer's ministry project requires the development of a methodology to educate and equip church laity to address the issue of domestic violence and the negative impact it has on the church and the community.

My hypotheses for the paper is:

How can I improve the different cultural communications with respect for the differences in people, by focusing on the issue of ministering to victims of domestic violence, are to break down some barriers that have limited the involvement of the church in this area, in an attempt to make disciples and improve the community?

It is this writer's contention that victims of domestic violence have been overlooked due to the silence and lack of equipping in the church. When an issue has not been addressed by the church, victims may take the silence to mean that the behavior is condoned. There are some scriptures that have been quoted to prolong violence, for example, Matt.19:6, "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." Divorce is allowed for adultery. Because of the

lack of faithfulness, trust has been broken. When a spouse hits the other, it is another form of unfaithfulness because trust has been broken. Once violence enters the marriage, the covenant has been broken. If a person cannot trust his or her spouse not to hit him or her, who can you trust?

Another scripture is found in Eph. 4:26, "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Many times victims are told they must be forgiving without being given the vindication they deserve. One can read in Luke 17:1-4:

And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, I repent, you must forgive him.

The first part of this scripture is not usually given to the victim who has been abused. Jesus says first to take care of yourself and if someone sins against you that person is to be rebuked. Then there is the repentance. Repentance in the Old and New Testament means to turn away from and not to repeat again. Most victims of domestic violence are in vicious cycles that are repeated. Only when there is true repentance should forgiveness begin to be considered.

This is not usually how the vicious cycle of domestic violence is interrupted. There are times when the church knows what is going on but just doesn't know what to do. There are times when silence is used as a cloak for continuation. We must, as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, give voice to the victims as we work in the Kingdom of God to come against the forces of darkness. There are others who have given voice to this subject matter we will begin to explore.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

This writer's passion is for those who are victims of domestic violence to be ministered to in the church so they may receive healing and wholeness. Equality between men and women is not stressed in most denominations. Women are encouraged to assume submissive roles with men. "The most shameful chapters in the history of the Christian church have occurred due to the abusive interpretations of the concept, submission. Slavery, oppress minorities, the fostering of abusive marriages, and the tolerance of domestic violence."¹ This writer of the impoverished masses, subservience of women to men, cruelty toward agrees with George Thompson in this whole statement, however will only expound on that it is the church's responsibility to address and not foster abusive marriages, and domestic violence, Many times this writer believes that this has not always been willful intent, yet without a doubt many times it has been willful intent.

The Bible is a book about deliverance from oppression, human liberation, a handbook on justice. In the Hebrew Bible, we can find Malachi declaring on God's behalf:

For I hate divorce, says the LORD the God of Israel, and covering one's garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless. (Mal. 4:3)

¹ George Thompson, "Triumph through Submission" "Triumph through Submission" [online sermon] available at www.providenceumc.org/sermons/s.2001; Internet; accessed May 2004.

Isaiah wrote to religious people who kept their religious observations with violence,

Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high. (Isa.58:4)

The New Testament writers also support the opinion that God would not give heed to the prayers of wife abusers. “Likewise you husbands, live considerately with your wives, bestowing honor on the woman as the weaker sex, since you are joint heirs of the grace of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered (1 Peter 3:7).” Battering is specifically mentioned to disqualify those who desire leadership in the church (1 Timothy 3:3 and Titus 1:7), In view of these texts, this writer is leaning toward the belief that throughout biblical history violence was present, yet spoken against so strongly so as not to be tolerated.

This writer believes it is necessary to take another look at the word submission. This writer believes without a doubt that the Bible is the inspired word of God. With this said there is also scripture to support that we all fall short of the glory of God. Some of this falling short can be in interpretation for those who read as well as translate. Those who seek to justify abuse of women have horribly misused the Bible. Most wife abusers will say that a woman is to submit, however, it is this writer’s belief that many do not know the true meaning of the word in the New Testament. There are often arguments concerning the headship of man but with little regard to ask what the concept meant to the original authors

The cluster of words commonly understood to be related to “submission” in the Greek New Testament are: “hupotasso (verb-to submit but also to behave responsibly toward another, to align oneself with, to relate to another in a meaningful way), hupotaktes (adjective-opposite to hupotaktes-disorderly, irresponsible, confused, lacking

meaning) and hupotage (noun-submission, attachment or copy).² The early Greek writers appeared to be using hupotasso in a military sense as in drawing up soldiers under the command of a leader. Implied often is loyalty to the leader. As a passive participle, the term is not necessarily applied to those under the leader's command but to those who were allies. The emphasis is more on association rather than upon dominance. The word here does not necessarily convey the thought of subordination but neither is putting up with any abuse implied.

The term is used twice in 1 Cor. 14. Once for the prophet (v32) and once of women (v32) The passage speaks of worshippers being allowed to participate in the service and that they should be able to hold themselves in check so that others will have a turn. Obviously respect for others was not being displayed. Many translators will not use the same translation for women. Since praying and prophesying aloud have already been approved (1 Corinthians 11:5), it is probably best understood that women should also behave in a responsible way and avoid disruptive behavior during services of worship.³

Christians are told to be subject to their rulers and their ordinances (Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:13-17). They are to be law-abiding citizens and responsible in society, yet never expected to submit to what is wrong. St Peter declares we ought to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29; 4:19)⁷

The Greek language possess not only an active and passive voice as does English but also a middle voice—usually employed when one performs an action on oneself. In the English language we call this use reflexive, yet in the Greek it is called the middle voice.

² Carol J. Adams, and Marie M. Fortune, *Violence against Women and Children, A Christian Theological Sourcebook* (New York: Continuum, 1995).

³ Ibid.

Catherine Clark Kroeger is a classicist, one who reconstructs the culture and attitudes of the ancient. Kroeger focuses on the world of the early church. In her writings, “Let’s Look Again at the Biblical Concept of Submission,” Kroeger interjects that while the New Testament bids servants and children to obey (*hupakouo*), wives are told to be associated or adherents of their husbands (*hupotasso*).⁴

Hupotasso also contains the idea of mutual support and responsibility, as in Eph. 5:21. Here believers are told to be “subject unto one another.” Since they are to exercise this activity in relationship with one another, the meaning cannot be one of authoritarian dominance and subservience. Clearly it indicates mutuality and sharing.

Next follows verse 22, the most text most often quoted to women, “Wives be subject (*hupotasso*) to your own husbands.” Non-Greek readers need to understand that this is not what the text says. There is no verb at all in verse 22. Instead, one must continue the sense of the verb found in verse 21, “being subject to one another—wives to your own husbands.” Whatever “submit” or “be subject” means in verse 21 must also be its sense in verse 22—and in 21 it clearly implies mutuality. The text goes on at considerable length about Christ’s self-sacrifice on behalf of the church and to challenge husbands to the same kind of treatment of their wives. Eph. 5:27-28 bespeaks Christ’s concern that the church should be developed to its full potential, and just so the husband needs to help a wife grow in every respect—including that of making decisions.⁵

Marriages in the Roman Empire of the first century C.E. were not made of this call to mutuality and commitment. Girls between the ages of twelve and fourteen were married to older men, often men they did not know, and “without hand” proviso. This meant the woman was still legally, financially, and religiously part of her father’s family rather than that of her husband’s. A woman with intelligence could play off the two families against one another, while the father retained the right to remove her from the marriage whenever

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

it pleased him. By the first century C.E., the instability of marriages was known throughout the Roman Empire. Because of this, the New Testament called for wives to become an integral part with commitment and responsible behavior with her husband rather than her family of birth.⁶ The words submit were used to bring unity in the marriage not abuse. This writer contends that what the Lord commands us to do will lead to holiness. Abuse in a marriage is never seen as something that is permissible in a marriage.

John Vining has written many books on abuse and has studied churches that promote abuse. In the book, *Silent Suffering Silent Shame* which he co-authors, he talks about characteristics of churches that abuse. Studies show that those who rated high in traditional religious values and belong to conservative religious denominations held more traditional sex role attitudes and were less concerned about forced intercourse between a man and his wife. A study that questioned battered women who had left their faith groups, including Charismatic Christian movements, found that domestic abuse was excused on the basis of the woman not providing a good Christian home and serving the needs of their husbands.⁷ “Biblically orthodox denominations,” meaning conservative and evangelical Christians were found to be the religious preference for a group of abusive men. Religious systems that thrive on blind faith on the part of its ministers and constituency cultivate a dangerous dependence on the part of its adherents. In contrast to a priesthood of believers where each believer can seek an understanding of God’s word and God’s will, the denominational leader becomes God’s word and will for the people.⁸ Religious masks are

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ John Kie Vining, Maxine Gernert, and Gail Lemmert, *Silent Suffering, Silent Shame* (Columbus, GA: Christian Life Publication, 1999).

⁸ Ibid.

often worn in order to appear spiritual when the private self is not consistent with the public self.

In the book, *Silent Suffering, Silent Shame*, there is also a listing of Faulty Religious Beliefs and Abuse. The church as a family can have the features of a dysfunctional family. Some religious beliefs tend to cause an acceptance or at least a tolerance of family violence. Some of these are (1) God intends for men to dominate women and children who, in turn, must submit to men. God's will for men is one of servant leadership not tyranny. Because woman was created after man, taken from man, named by man, and created as man's helper, does not mean woman is inferior.⁹ (2) Woman is morally inferior to man and cannot be trusted. Man and woman were both created in the image of God, both were tempted, both sinned, both fell. "Femaleness or femininity does not denote defectiveness and defilement any more than maleness or masculinity assures holiness and spirituality."¹⁰ (3) Suffering is a Christian virtue to which women in particular have been called. Suffering may be a part of a Christian experience, however the believer will have the opportunity to volunteer for the suffering as Christ did in the garden. Abuse should not be considered as what a Christian is to endure to share in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of the kingdom. There is no greater good nor does God get any glory in domestic violence.¹¹ (4) Marriages must be preserved at all costs. In scripture, marriage is a covenant in which God participates, not merely observes. Violence in the marriage covenant violates the marriage covenant as well as the partners involved. Too many times, the Church has sided with the broken institution of marriage rather than

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

the broken individuals.¹² The institution itself must never take away from those whom God ordained the institution for, those who are created in the image of God. The sacrifices of a marriage covenant should not include abusing the individual within the covenant. (5) Forgiveness must be prompt and true forgiveness will lead to reconciliation. Real forgiveness does not take away the pain of betrayal. Cheap grace and Christian symbols of forgiveness does not promote health and healing in either the victim or the perpetrator.¹³

This writer has had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Vining on the phone. Dr. Vining serves as the Director of Counseling at the Church of God Center for Ministerial Care and as the Coordinator of Family Ministries for the Church of God. Much of Dr. Vining's work is in the area of Domestic Violence. When questioned by this writer what the history has been for the Church of God concerning violence, he responded that we really did not have a history. There has been a silence in our churches as well as in other denominations. Yet Dr. Vining and many others are working toward changing this silence in the church.

Therefore, having this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (2 Cor. 4:1-2).

The hidden deeds of darkness must be exposed and renounced by the Church in order that the truth of God's word be presented without craftiness.

The church at least must try to understand what the repercussions are for victims of domestic violence and at best attempt to minimize the terror. Carol Adams speaks

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

about the effects of suffering and theology for the Christian trauma survivor. The questions she is left to answer respond to the Christian ethical and theological issues, such as repentance, forgiveness, suffering, and redemption. When violence becomes the norm, these issues complicate his or her thoughts about leaving the mate that hurts her or him.¹⁴

Or what man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9)

When a victim turns to Christians for bread for their soul, they may feel that they are given stones. Adams has done a remarkable job of explaining how a victim will try to fit their traumatic experience into their religious understanding. Within a very constricted life, one will find that the victim has worked hard as a theologian, attempting to understand the experience, God, and their savior. In the face of physical violation, it is hard to understand how the soul can still belong to you, but how does the soul relate to the injured body? How does one relate this to the one who is causing the suffering and to the outer world and the faith community? As a victim subordinates interests to the control of the perpetrator who hurts, the victim may attempt to subordinate reality to certain religious precepts that encourage endurance of the violence rather than challenging it, focusing on spiritual characteristics rather than behavior. What the victim faces is a theological constriction.¹⁵ Usually the victim believes one of two things (1) I am being abandoned by God, or (2) I am being punished by God. It is the responsibility of the Church to offer bread for these stones. We as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ need to discard the idea that abuse is the victim's cross to bear. Jesus endured the cross and all

¹⁴ Carol J. Adams, *Woman Battering* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1994).

¹⁵ Ibid.

the abuse that bearing that cross entailed for anyone else to have to endure any abuse for any reason.

Traci C. West in her book, *Wounds of the Spirit*, does a twist on domestic violence in a voice that beacons to be heard. She speaks from the experiences of black women and the stereotype profiles that have been handed down over the centuries. Many black women have been portrayed as women who need to be beaten into submission. There's that word again that crosses all race and ethnic boundaries. What this writer found to be very perceptive in her book was her rationale for Christian involvement. The requisite Christian engagement in definite practices that uphold women's genuine moral worth can be called "truth-work."¹⁶ "Truth-work exemplifies an important tenet of the Christian faith that commends the appropriation of Jesus Christ as truth. This appropriation does not consist of an intellectual assent, rather it demands a specific praxis."¹⁷ Christians can live out the realizations of truth by working to create conditions in the world that reflect truth. This process, West claims, is participating in the incarnation of justice, which requires literal engagement with distorting human realities such as violence, white supremacy, and male dominance. It means doing the work required that enables the truth of human wholeness, worth, and dignity to be fulfilled.¹⁸

Churches can play a critical role by sponsoring and organizing what West calls truth-work. The church possesses an independence from corporate and state control that enables it to play a unique advocacy role in the community life. This writer works at a

¹⁶ Traci C. West, *Wounds of the Spirit* (New York: University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance! An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1982), 92.

¹⁸ West, *Wounds of the Spirit*.

Christian Growth Center that, because the organization is not funded by the state or federal government, can be involved in the communities we serve in a way that is Christ centered. Churches can function as effective and vital organs of the Christian faith by offering victim-survivors needed confirmation of the death-dealing realities that threaten their lives and by opposing those realities. The church is one organization that has the chance to act compassionately by paying direct supportive attention to those caught in anguishing circumstances and consequences of intimate violence.¹⁹

James Poling's ideas involve "servant hood," and "serving others with love." The symbol of servant hood to Christians is precious since we believe that Jesus came not be served but to serve. We express our love to one another by serving as Jesus set the example. Poling states that we may not all view servant hood with the same perceptual views of Christianity, but that fact that we are to serve, out of our own humanity, means to "serve others as they would want to be served."²⁰

Kenneth Pohly challenges those who serve to evaluate the results of service by acquiring feedback from those who have been served. The test is: did the one being served benefit from the service. Did the person change as a result of being served? Did the person become wiser, more autonomous, a better person, more likely to become a servant?²¹

This writer believes that as we minister to victims of domestic violence we can evaluate how we have affected the person's life by the change in their personhood as well as their lifestyle. The Bible tells us that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ James Newton Poly, *Deliver Us from Evil: Resisting Racial and Gender Oppression* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1984), 144.

²¹ Kenneth Pohly, *Transforming the Rough Places: The Ministry of Supervision*, (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 2001), 33.

minds and to present our bodies as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2). This sacrifice is not for abuse but for service in the Kingdom of God. As we have our minds transformed according to the will of God, the effect of our acts of worship should become evident in other people's lives. Jesus was known to minister to those who were suffering. Often after healing those who were suffering, Jesus would send them back into their own communities. This can be seen with the Paralytic, "Rise, take up your bed and go home." (Matthew 9:6b) Jesus did not send the man back into his community until he was made whole. We as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ should go and do likewise

Summary

The objective for the Ministry of Excellence Model is to provide a supportive, caring, environment in the Church for victims of domestic violence. There is a need for training and equipping of the saints to do the work that we are called to do as followers of Jesus Christ.

There are many theologians who can talk about biblical theology, yet there are still many needed to do theology. The old saying can apply here: people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. Our knowledge can puff us up or take us into the ministry of reconciliation. There are many scholars with many voices to inform us. We will explore this ministry more in the historical, biblical and theological foundations as it applies to the subject of ministering to victims of domestic violence.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

In this chapter, we will detail theoretical foundations that provide support for the position that the victims of domestic violence are in need of ministers. Ministry in the time of the New Testament (NT) was referred to using one of four possible Greek terms for “(official) ministry”: (1) *telos*: “office” or free “service,” as rendered by a citizen, emphasizing its perfect fulfillment; (2) *time*: “office,” sometimes generally “tasks: stressing the dignity that is combined with it’s practice (3) *arche* “office” or “magistracy” in it’s character of leading those who will follow; and (4) *leitourgia*: “public service,” perform by citizens at their own expense to the community or to the gods (e.g., organizing and financing a temple festival; and the “ministry” of the Priest in the LXX), *Minister* service rendered by any citizen, or member of a religious group.¹

Servant, diakonos (servant or slave) was the term used to describe any ministry in the church, or outside of the religious order. There are servants in the church founded by Paul, “those who are over you,” “or who care for you,” 1 Thessalonians 5:12, as well as “first converts” who “devoted themselves to the service of the saints” and should therefore

¹ David Noel Freedman, *Anchor Bible Dictionary: Ministry in the Early Church*, Volume 4 K-N, (New York: Doubleday 1992), 835.

be given recognition, (1 Corinthians 16:18,19). Philippians 1:1 mentions overseers and servants.² Ministers are to serve. We begin by looking at the biblical foundation.

Biblical Foundation

How does secular society deal with domestic violence and how did Jesus promote healing even when the religious leaders of his days promoted violence?

Domestic violence by barest definition is violence within a home. For broader definitions, there are usually two components. Domestic usually involves “family relationship, explicit and formal or informal, usually between adults of similar age, else it is labeled child abuse or child molestation for children, and elder abuse for older adults; Romantic relationships including marriages, cohabitation, and dating relationships, sexual and non-sexual, exclusive or nonexclusive, heterosexual or homosexual.”³ Violence can include, but is not limited to, physical violence, ranging from rape to murder to unwanted physical contact. There is also indirect physical violence, throwing objects near the victim, destroying objects, and harming animals. Violence can be mental or emotional. This can include verbal threats of physical violence to the victim, the self, or others including children, insults, put-downs, and attacks. The threats can also be nonverbal, i.e. gestures, facial expressions, and body postures. Violence can also include economic and social abuse. This is the controlling of the victim’s money and other economic resources,

² Freedman, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Servant, NT: 838.

³ *Wikipedia* [online encyclopedia]; available at <http://en.wikipedia.org>; Internet.

preventing the victim from seeing relatives and friends and isolating the victim from any social contacts.⁴

The biblical foundation for this project can be found in the manner in which Jesus responded to victims, such as that found in Luke 10:25-37:

And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

This lawyer found himself a lawbreaker. He had not practiced the righteousness of the law, which he claimed to understand. Rather than acknowledge this truth, he sought to justify himself and show how difficult fulfilling this commandment was. Jesus refused to be drawn into the controversy. Instead, he painted a picture to draw out confession. Both of the men who passed by were in sacred office and professed to expound the Scriptures.

⁴ Ibid.

They were of the class specially chosen to be representatives of God to the people. These men were to lead men to understand God's great love toward humanity.

For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. (Heb. 5:1-2)

These men were called to do the work that Jesus had described as his own when he said,

The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Lk. 4:18).

The question "who is my neighbor?" has been answered to include victims of domestic violence. Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean someone in the church and has no reference to race, color, or class. Every person who needs our help is our neighbor. Every soul that has been bruised or wounded by the adversary is our neighbor. If we are Christians, we should not pass by on the other side away from those who so desperately need our help. When we see the need, we should not be the one to say, "This does not concern me." We who are Christians have been exhorted to show charity and zeal. The law of Christ is the law of love.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Gal. 6:1).

In biblical times, the Jewish nations despised the Samaritans. They were viewed as a mixed-blood race resulting from the inter-marriages between Northern Kingdom exiles and the Gentiles who had been brought into the land by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:24). The Jews seriously believed that they were the only "pure-blooded," truly chosen people of God and considered Samaritans to be beneath them. The Samaritans were considered to

be more than just social outcasts but also spiritual half-breeds. Their Bible consisted of the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch) only. The Samaritans believed that Mount Gerizim was the mountain on which Moses had commanded an altar be built (Deuteronomy 27: 4-6), This is where Abraham and Isaac had built altars (Genesis 12:7: 33:20). There was much hostility between the Samaritans and the Jews. Devout Jews on their way from Galilee to religious festivals in Jerusalem often elected to travel down the East Side of the Jordan River, rather than to risk passing through the region of Samaria. Samaritans refused to provide overnight shelter.

What prompted Jesus to use a Samaritan in his debate with a lawyer? Not just a lawyer, but a crowd of listeners. In Jerusalem, the priests who run the temple and perform the sacrifices wanted to make sure that the temple was a source of orthodox teaching and remained the focal point of Jewish identity. It was the custom to send out lawyers to visit the towns and villages where they would instruct the people in the observance of the Torah. This also helped to monitor any unauthorized itinerant preaching. Then there were the Pharisees who had developed spirituality based on achieving ritual purity required of priests for themselves, with the hope of converting the whole nation to this same level of purity so that Israel will become a pure nation. They too sent emissaries to teach the people in the marketplaces. It was not a coincidence that when Jesus showed up, a lawyer, Pharisee or both would be on the scene also.⁵

Before the debate with Jesus and the lawyer, Luke records the return of the seventy disciples from the preaching and healing mission (Lk. 10: 17-24). Hearing about

⁵ April O'Flaherty, "The Good Samaritan?" *Whosoever* Volume 6: Issue 1 July/August 2001 [magazine online]; available at <http://www.whosoever.org/v6i1/april.html>; Internet; accessed 31 July 2005.

the successful mission appears to have impacted the lawyer for the text reads “and behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test.” The word “test” does not necessarily imply negative connotations; it may simply mean he wanted to see if Jesus was faithful to the law. However, the Greek word used here is *ek-pi-rad’-zo* i.e. endeavors, scrutinize, entice, discipline, assay, examine, go about, prove, and tempt.⁶ The lawyer, who is well versed in the Law of Moses, stood up to draw attention to himself. Later, he sought to “justify” himself with another question; implying he was interested in more than just a simple answer to his question. The lawyer’s question was similar to one asked by the rich young ruler (Lk. 18:18). In both cases, Jesus pointed them back to the Law. The lawyer of course has to give an answer. He still probably thinks he is better versed in the Torah than Jesus. Although he did not get an opportunity to correct Jesus in his answer to the question, he now has an opportunity to instruct the people gathered around him in Torah. One of the skills of a lawyer was the ability to bring together commandments of the Torah scattered in different places. In this case, he puts a verse from Deuteronomy up against a verse from Leviticus to give this answer: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” (Deut. 6: 5 and Lev. 19:18) Surely this impressed the unauthorized teacher along with the crowd, but not for long. Again the tables are turned on the lawyer. Jesus replies, “You have answered right; do this, and you will live.” Now the unauthorized teacher is validating the lawyer. It is the lawyer’s job to validate another teacher or to prove him guilty of false teaching. The lawyer cannot leave the scene at this point because it is Jesus who has passed judgment and appraised his teaching. Luke says he wanted to

⁶ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, O-Z*, (1991).

“justify himself.” He wanted to be the one thought more righteous by the crowd. He must put Jesus down in some way in order to “justify himself.” In the context of the first question, there are basically only two avenues that the lawyer can take. One is to choose between love of God and love of neighbor, the other is to define the scope of one or more of the terms. This man was not a lawyer because he did not have brains, quite the contrary. The lawyer knew that the villagers faced the conflict between love of God and love of neighbor every day. It wasn’t a matter of love, but one of economics. There was a temple tax levied on all Jews. The tax supported the sacrificial cult in the temple, the focal point of Jewish identity. The priest was supported by this tax. It was the priests that negotiated with God for good weather and crops. If you loved God, you paid the temple tax. The dilemma was not having enough money to pay the full temple tax and care for your family or anybody else in need. Most peasants were behind in payments of their temple taxes. The peasants anguished over when to love God by sending money for the temple tax and when to love their neighbor by using their provisions for their families and others in need.⁷

Jesus was known by this time to not approve of all the sacrifices that were being made in the temple. There was a debate in Mark (Mk. 7: 9-14) where Jesus reproved the Pharisees for nullifying the commandment to honor one’s parents by making their estate *korban*, i.e. dedicated to the temple. No doubt, the lawyer had heard of this previous debate. So, in order to justify himself, the lawyer asked Jesus to define the term “neighbor.” It was not because the lawyer did not know who his neighbor was, but once

⁷ Mark A. Copeland, “The Good Samaritan” *Executable Outlines*, 2004; available at http://www.ccel.org/contrib/exec_outlines/pa/pa_20.htm; Internet; accessed 31 July, 2005.

again, the lawyer desired to trick Jesus or set Jesus up to define a term out of context.

Jesus begins to tell the parable that, in the view of his listeners, could very well have been true. The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho is about 20 miles. This was a dangerous road, known as "The Way of Blood" because of the robbers. This is something that could have happened to any of the listeners who traveled in the same territory. It is significant that of the four main characters in this narration, the man who is attacked on the road is the only one who is not identified by social, class, or race. All we know is that this person is a victim. The first two people who come along and pass by on the other side are identified as a priest and a Levite. The priest and Levite may not have passed by to just be cold hearted. According to the Torah, touching a corpse makes a man ritually impure. If either one should become ritually impure, they would not be able to perform their ritual obligations for the people for a time (Leviticus 22:4-7). The third man is identified as a Samaritan. The listeners probably thought that, if the priest and the Levite passed by, the Samaritan would probably inflict more pain. The Samaritans were not the people who were known for doing good deeds. The disciples of Jesus were also listening to this exchange between Jesus and the lawyer. We read that the disciples of Jesus were not received in a Samaritan village (Luke 9: 51-56). The disciples wanted to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them for not receiving them. There would no doubt be tension for all who were listening to this story, reflecting on history as well as current events. "Christ was the Samaritan," the rejected one, who was showing mercy to the spiritual and physical needs of the victim, whereas the religious leaders were totally indifferent. No one likes to see pain in another. We try to immediately call an ambulance, dial 911, or maybe even call a relative. How many will come out of their comfort zone to

give that place to another? This is what the Samaritan did. He not only put the wounded man on his own animal and took him to the inn; he gave the innkeeper two denarii (two days wages) to provide care. How many today would take an injured victim to the hospital in our own car? This more than likely means there will be blood on the seats that may or may not come off. Then, if we went that far, would we just drop the person off, or do as this Samaritan did and pay the hospital bill, then come back to see about the person?

Domestic violence is the one area where people are prone not to be a Good Samaritan. Part of this is due to the way women are viewed inside as well as outside of the church. Women were prominent leaders in the early church up to and after the middle of the second century. Their role was not just confined to deaconesses concerned with widows and orphans. "They were church leaders who taught, debated, healed, and perhaps even baptized."⁸

By the third and fourth centuries, female leadership was rejected by church orders in the patriarchal society. "The Didascalia Apostolorum states that women were not specifically appointed by Jesus to teach and prophesy, they should not proclaim the Christ. This document notes that there were women who were disciples. However, Jesus would have instructed the others if the women were to teach."⁹ Patriarchal writers could not totally omit mention of the women who were leaders in the early church. Those women who could not be ignored were given diminished roles. Origen and Chrysostom, who wrote that only when the "angelic" conditions exist could women serve in the leadership

⁸ Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Word, Spirit, and Power* (San Francisco, CA: Harper-Collins, 1995).

⁹ Ibid.

positions of disciples or apostles, reduced Phoebe to an assistant of Paul's.¹⁰ There were women who were disciples, prophets, and deacons. There were no women indicated among the original twelve, but there were also no White Anglo-Saxon males. Jesus told the women at the tomb to go and tell and the woman at the well led a revival in Sychar.¹¹

There are already enough debates over a woman's place in the church. It is this writer's focus to merely point out that the way leaders of the church have formulated their thought patterns concerning women has not helped victims of domestic violence who are women, due to their gender and what is believed to be their "place," be it in the home or the church. The focus on gender is not to add more theology of women in the church but rather to show the conflict of women being oppressed. Marcia Riggs has a working definition of oppression in her book. "Oppression refers to the process by which relationships of imbalanced power between social groups are maintained, thus privileging ones group over another and thereby limiting, injuring, and or controlling the less privileged group. These processes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules."¹² Although this definition was derived for black women ministers in the Black Churches, it can be used also for women victims of domestic violence. Oppression is oppression any way you look at it. Sanctifying oppression by gender does not make it right. As in the parable of the Good Samaritan, there is a cost for compassion.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Vashti McKenzie, *Not Without a Struggle* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1996).

¹² Marcia Riggs *Plenty Good Room* (Cleveland, OH: Cleveland Press, 2002).

Let us focus on the woman's place in the home, where most domestic violence occurs. John Temple Bristow in his book *What Paul Really Said About Women* says, "Paul's Gentile converts to the faith were heirs to Greek philosophy, with Aristotelian and stoic disdain for women. His Jewish converts were heirs to the authority of the Old Testament, which offers quite a varied and colorful collection of examples of womanhood."¹³ Although the Hebrew Bible shows strong female figures as in Ruth, Esther, Deborah and Rahab, the rabbis of Judaism, for the most part, devalued women in their teachings.¹⁴ The negative interpretation of Genesis 3 regarding women is that Eve fell for the promises of the serpent and, as a result, was cursed with child bearing and was to serve Adam.¹⁵ It is this negative interpretation of the creation story that lends credence to the position that women are inferior to men. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, there is a deep contrast in how women were dealt with. Adultery carried with it the penalty of death for both partners (Deut. 22:22) Yet a man who raped an unengaged virgin could get away with paying her father for spoiling property (Deut. 28:29). There is no specific place in the Hebrew Law where the husband is given the right to abuse his wife. The husband had enormous power over his wife whereas women had hardly any area of redress concerning the treatment of their husbands. Still the husband could address his suspicions of his wife's infidelity at his whim (Num. 5).

There should be no religious, racial, gender, or national barriers to showing compassion. Jesus crossed many barriers to show compassion to women. The church's

¹³ Mary McClung, "Suffering in the Name of the Father" *Windspeaker* Vol. 12, (1974).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

silence on the subject is tacit permission for abuse to continue. The church has not been silent on issues such as prayer in the schools, homosexuality and abortion. If the church has not kept silent on the violence committed against an unborn child, how much more should the church be vocal on the violence against the woman who carries the child? The Bible tells the stories of how Jesus had compassion for the women and went out of his way to meet with them. Not only did Jesus meet with them, but also the Gospel did not change when Jesus encountered women in oppressive circumstances. There should be no religious, racial, gender, or national barriers to showing compassion. Christians are called to take risks. Luke tells us to “give to every one who begs from you, and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again.” (Lk. 6:30) The Samaritan took a great risk by stopping to help. The robbers could have been still standing by. We do not know if we will be taken advantage of if we help someone. This is an area where we must trust God. We must be willing to come outside of our own agendas and schedules. The Samaritan was on a journey, but took the time to stop and help care for the victim. Jesus taught us to take the time to show compassion even when we are forced (Matt. 5:41). The first mile may have been forced, but the second mile was given out of love. We must be willing to make sacrifices. This means giving more than just our time and energy. The Samaritan used some of his own provisions. He even agreed to provide for future help. The parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to a higher standard of love and compassion. We must, as the parable shows, redefine our “neighbor.” We must be willing to show compassion. Jesus told his disciples “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:21) With victims of domestic violence, can we go and do likewise?

The compassion of Jesus is shown in Matt. 9:35-38:

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Preaching the gospel of the kingdom draws all people into it. We must do as Jesus did and go to those who are rejected and despised.

In society as well as the church, domestic violence is minimized and trivialized.

The suffering of women has been met in counseling from the church with encouragement to self-sacrifice, patience, perform their duty and be submissive for the sake of the gospel. There is no way that the danger and harm done to a woman made in the image of God by this kind of advice can be called Good News.

If the church does not take a stand on domestic violence, they will continue to foster what Edward Wimberly calls relational refugees. "Relational refugees are persons not grounded in nurturing and liberating relationships. They are detached and without significant connections with others who promote self-development."¹⁶ These people lack a relational environment that will help them to define and nurture their self-identity. Consequently, they withdraw into destructive relationships that make their predicaments worse instead of better. Without positive relationships, relational refugees will not have others around whose attitudes they can internalize. Wimberly further states that Jesus scandalized his contemporaries by sharing his table with sinners, prostitutes, and tax collectors. The church Jesus left behind is called to function as one body in which all the

¹⁶ Edward P. Wimberly, *Relational Refugees* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 20.

members are recognized as of equal value. "Ethical systems that assign different values to different people are immoral because they deny the image of God, which all people possess, and cheapen community."¹⁷

Gail Elizabeth Wyatt, in her book *Stolen Woman*, adds another black voice to the issue of domestic violence. Her claim is that once the civil rights struggle was perceived as won (black people had gained equal rights), there was an assertion of new found freedom to make mainstream socialization about gender roles the norm in black life. Wyatt says that "black men asserted masculinist subjectivity not by vigilantly challenging white supremacy but by first insisting on the subordination of women, particularly black women."¹⁸ Manhood was redefined. No longer was manhood providing and protecting. It was proved by ones capacity to coerce, control and dominate. Wyatt explains that under the conditions of slavery, women survived assault upon their sexual selves through psychological adaptation. The first adaptive behavior was to learn to behave one way even if you felt another. The second was not to discuss the kind of abuse that you were experiencing. Silence and secrecy were two necessary tools of survival. Another was that one had to live with a sense of dignity in spite of the abuse.¹⁹

Jesus draws attention to the question of who is my neighbor, by pointing out who was a neighbor to the one in need. So, our neighbor is anyone in need. This, without a doubt, covers victims of domestic violence. We are told through the Scriptures to "be doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22) and

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Gail Elizabeth Wyatt, *Stolen Woman* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1997).

¹⁹ Ibid.

If any one thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (James 1:26-27)

Not only do we need to break the silence in the church, but we also need to be a doer of the Word and minister to victims of domestic violence. Anything less would not be in line with our service in the Kingdom of God as a follower of Jesus Christ, who demands our obedience.

Historical Foundation

Even in biblical times, domestic violence existed. In II Samuel, one can read about King David's sons, Absalom and Amnon, and about his daughter Tamar. Amnon desired to lay with his sister Tamar. A friend helped Amnon devise a plan to rape her. Amnon pretended to be sick. Amnon's father (King David) came to see him. Amnon asked his father if Tamar would make some cakes for him to eat. When David sent his daughter, Amnon forced Tamar into his bed and "lay with her." After raping his sister, Amnon "hated her with a great hatred" and sent her away in shame and disgrace. Absalom, the other brother, heard of it and became distressed. Absalom said to Tamar, hold your peace. Some two years later Absalom killed Amnon; some believe to avenge his sister. The scripture says that when King David heard of the rape, "he became very angry," but would not punish his son Amnon because he loved him.²⁰ Violence has always been part of history. It is time for those of us in the church to start breaking the silence.

Dr Martin Luther King said in *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*:

²⁰ II Samuel 13

It is the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will cure all ills. Actually time is neutral. It can be used either destructively or constructively. I am coming to feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic works and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people ²¹

Some are still saying, "wait, equal rights will come." However, history has shown over and over that silence does not bring about change for those in bondage. There appears to be a cultural denial of the change in the status of women while professing equal rights.

Throughout history, women have been considered subordinate to men. Professor of History at Bristol Community College Virginia Winstanley points out four fundamental concepts that shaped the subordination of women to men.²² The first two concepts are systems of authority: Hierarchy and Patriarchy. Hierarchy is where a few individuals or groups at the top of the hierarchy rule others by controlling basic resources i.e. food, property, shelter education, money, medicine and jobs. Since these people control the needed resources, they also control the people who need access to them. These people are usually born into a ruling class. Patriarchy is a system of authority that inserts gender into the hierarchy by insisting that only higher-class males are born to be able to control basic resources. This system does not allow women to have any rights, privileges, or resources, even the right to their own children.²³ The second two concepts that shaped the

²¹ J. Washington, *Letter from Birmingham Jail in a Testament of Hope* (San Francisco, CA: Harper. 1986).

²² Deborah Lagutaris, "Law as a Strategy of Power and Domination." [online article] available at <http://www.debocracy.org/womenundergun.html>; Internet; accessed 30 March, 2003.

²³ Ibid.

subordination of women are ideologies of gender: Misogyny and Polarity. Misogyny is a belief that gender attributes necessitate the subordination of women based on their negative character traits such as being untrustworthy, illogical, irresponsible, gullible, wicked, illogical, or childlike. Polarity is a belief that men and women are opposites of one another. In this view, if the man is strong, the woman is weak. If the man is just, then the woman is evil.

Historians have noted that there have been periods of time when women have not been considered subordinate to men. There were characteristics in society in which women were considered equal partners with men. In the earliest human hunter-gatherer cultures, women were considered equal partners with men. Authority was not considered to be according to gender, authority was shared according to one's skill and age. There was a division of labor according to gender whereas the women tended to domestic duties and the children and the men hunted and were the warriors. There were abundant resources in the earth and people worshipped nature and fertility goddesses.²⁴

There are two theories that attempt to explain the growth of hierarchical and patriarchal systems. One is the Neolithic Revolution (the beginning of agriculture). Some historians believe that when animal husbandry introduced the notion of private property, emphasis shifted from sharing resources in order to ensure the survival of the clan to hoarding them in order to ensure the survival of the family. The second theory points to the shift in the male role from being journeying warriors to warriors who were protectors of property and territory who now stayed in one place to explain the growth of patriarchal

²⁴ Ibid.

systems.²⁵ The hierarchical system of authority was first introduced in countries such as Egypt and the regions of Mesopotamia. Under this system, the notion of scarcity was introduced along with the notions of animal husbandry and private property. With private property came inheritance, and the control of female fertility became crucial. Men wanted to be certain that their legal heirs were inheriting their property.

Under Egypt's hierarchical system of authority, people from high social class families controlled social institutions. This social status could be gained through marriage, birth, or as a result of education. A woman was free to consent to marriage and divorce was available to women as well as men. Historians believe that patriarchy was not introduced with the hierarchical system of authority in Egypt because Egypt was isolated and protected from invasion of aggressors. In contrast, Mesopotamia had the patriarchal system of authority introduced with the hierarchical system of authority where there was a harsh physical environment, which was open to aggressive invasion. Consequently, people in these regions began to look to their male warriors for protection. As patriarchy took root, the people began to worship male gods instead of female gods.²⁶ Males began to control property, this included women and children who were now considered to be property of the men.

In Jewish tradition, the legal system that structured the family also provided the opportunity for unchecked abuse in the home. In marriage, Jewish law gave the rights to the male and the woman was considered his possession. Should a husband experience violence by his wife, he had the immediate option for divorce. In fact, any cause for

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

divorce was considered appropriate and the husband only had to hand a bill of divorcement to his wife in the presence of two witnesses and the marriage was ended. On the other hand, the wife had no right to divorce unless the husband became a leper or an apostate to Judaism.²⁷

The idea of the males as the head of the family continued into European society and with it came legal dictates allowing physical punishment in the family. In medieval “laws of chastisement,” physical force could be used to discipline women or children as well. The medieval church taught that a husband had the right, if not the obligation, to beat his wife ²⁸

Secular institutions of the medieval era also sanctioned the use of physical punishment in the home. In a French code, dating from the thirteenth century, men were “excused from the injuries inflicted on their wives, nor should the law intervene. Provided he neither kills nor maims her, it is legal for a man to beat his wife if she wrongs him.”²⁹

Not everyone in the medieval times condoned abusive behavior in the home. A Jewish rabbi of the thirteenth century made the following comments about violence in the home, He said: “The cry of the daughters of our people had been heard concerning the sons of Israel who raise their hands to strike their wives. Yet who has given authority for a husband to beat his wife? Is it not rather forbidden to strike any person of Israel?

²⁷ H. N. Wright, *Communication: Key to your Marriage* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1974).

²⁸ G. L. Martin, *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987).

²⁹ F. Gies and H. Gies, *Women in the Middle Ages* (New York: Thomas T. Crowell Company, 1978).

Nevertheless have we heard cases where Jewish women complained regarding their treatment before the Communities and no action was taken on their behalf.”³⁰

The rabbi then goes on to outline a process where the wife could seek financial settlement similar to alimony or maintenance.³¹ Although attempts such as that of Rabbi Perez were made to identify and compensate for abuse in the home, by the time of the Reformation, little had changed in terms of attitudes toward family violence.

Much of the emphasis on the submission of the wife can be traced back to interpretations of Paul's letter to the Ephesians 5:22-24, “Wives be subject to your husbands . . .” “The insistence that suffering is the highest and holiest of Christian virtues is another theological concept that has kept the battered women in the abusive situation.”³² Mary McClung says that people need to move from the theology of the cross to the theology of resurrection and liberation. Women have been encouraged to accept the suffering role and this leads to abuse. Abuse is not and should not be considered the wife's “cross to bear.” The Christian church has played a major role, both by its theology and its practice, in contributing to the attitudes that have led to wife battering.³³ Much Christian theology taught women that they are inferior, that they should be submissive and that their husband has the right to treat them however he chooses. Jesus did not teach that women were inferior; women were among his followers teaching the gospel in the early church. Many of the teachings that have contributed to the abuse of women have developed since

³⁰ G. L. Martin, *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse* (Waco, TX: Word Books 1987).

³¹ Ibid.

³² McClung, *Suffering in the Name of the Father*.

³³ Ibid.

the time of Christ. "The early church fathers were strongly influenced by the concept of the split between the mind and the body in classical philosophy."³⁴ The higher principles of the mind and the spirit were considered male and respected. The lower principles of body and matter were labeled female and devalued.³⁵ Women were considered to be emotional and carnal and men were considered to be rational. It was felt that the body had to be subject to the mind and so women must submit to men. The male mind having control over the female body had the right to chastise the wife.

During the Middle Ages, canon law (the law of the church) gave man the right to control his wife as a possession. These teachings also led to the misconception that man is not emotional. The only acceptable emotion for man was anger, and this could be directed against his wife in the form of physical violence. Divorce is often the only answer for a violent marriage, yet until recently the church refused to accept divorce. Because the church did not accept divorce, the woman was encouraged by the church to remain in the marriage.³⁶ The church had taken scriptures as proof texts (isolating one scripture to validate an opinion). Another deterrent for a woman to leave her husband in the church is the silence. Joshua Cohen wrote an article "Domestic violence and the church: The silence must be broken." It is believed that misinterpretation of the Bible has aided in keeping domestic violence alive and well. Cohen interviewed Dr. Francis Nelson Williams who is the staff chaplain at Riley Hospital, part of the ministerial team at Robinson Community African Methodist Episcopal church in Indianapolis, and a 16-year victim of domestic

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

violence. Williams says she did not feel at all as if there was support for her during her experience. There was nowhere to turn. In many ways, the church keeps a family isolated if it is known they are victims of domestic violence, said Williams. Many people turn to the church for guidance in every aspect of their lives; the church should be ready and prepared to handle the problems of its parishioners. This would include providing the resources needed to promote healing. Williams also stated that family violence centers should be established by the church, and operated by recovered victims of family violence.³⁷

Domestic violence crosses all boundaries and is not related to religion, socioeconomic level, culture, educational background, age or sexual orientation. Judaism's teachings and traditions, since the days of the Torah, have instructed its adherents in human relationships. It wasn't until the Talmud began to be compiled that spousal abuse was specifically addressed, but "Jews can be proud that our ancestors confronted the problem centuries before other societies," says Carol Goodman Kaufman.³⁸ From the inclusion in its pages of rabbinical discussions about the topic, it can be deduced that if abuse was discussed, it must have existed, even though some will say it did not exist because laws regarding abuse were not on the books.

Maimonides wrote in the 12th century that a man could beat his wife with a rod for failing to do the housework (Isshut 21:10).³⁹ This is the same Maimonides who was a

³⁷ Joshua Cohen, "Domestic violence in the church: The silence must be broken" *Indianapolis Recorder* Vol. 107 (2002).

³⁸ Carol Goodman Kaufman, "Open our Communal Eyes to Spousal Abuse" *Forward* Vol. CVI (2003).

³⁹ Ibid.

world-renowned physician; he may well have treated the bruises and broken bones of abuse victims. On the other hand, medieval Rabbi Simha ben Speyer wrote that an abusive husband should be punished financially; and even physically, if he does not cease his wife beating.⁴⁰

What is unfortunate is that in modern times rabbinical seminaries have for the most part ignored these discussions in their classes. Consequently, they are not prepared to deal with the victims of abuse. Is there any difference from Jewish abuse than that in the general community? In some ways, the answer would be yes. There is the problem of the *aunah*, the chained woman. To this day, Jewish law gives a husband the sole right to give a get, the Jewish divorce decree. An abusive husband many times withholds granting the divorce decree in order to extort huge sums of money from the wife and her family or to gain custody of the children. This is a form of emotional and financial abuse that is unique in the Jewish community. Another way the Jewish abuse is different is the *mesirah*, the prohibition against going to the civil authorities with a complaint against another Jew.⁴¹ Rabbis, particularly Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox rabbis, told Kaufman that they would not call the police and some said this would be true even in a case of physical abuse. The rabbis claim, “We take care of our own.” Taking care of their own means that one rabbi told the abusive husband where to find his wife in a shelter in order to “encourage” her to come home. It also means leaving an abused wife at the mercy of a *beit din*, a rabbinic court, which was at best unsympathetic to her, at worst humiliating.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

During the American Colonial Period domestic violence was not considered a crime or even a problem. It was accepted that a man could discipline his wife and children as he saw fit. It was commonplace for a man to use a leather belt or wooden switch to his children for misbehaving. It was also common for a man to beat his wife for such offenses as talking back to him, not getting the laundry clean enough, or not preparing dinner to his expectations. For most of society, his behavior was considered normal, even if not pleasant to witness.⁴³ Not only was it a common belief during this time period, but it was also a legal right. Most courts in America upheld the old English Common Law beliefs that a man was the master of his home. Only in extreme cases of abuse would the court step in. This was usually after the wife had been severely maimed or killed. Some political activists during that period tried to push test cases through various appellate courts, however, the appeals courts in most states continued to uphold a man's common law right to use violence in disciplining his family.⁴⁴

The general standard established by the court for determining what was abuse was called the Rule of Thumb. In the case of *State V. Rhodes* 61 N.C. 453 (1868), the North Carolina Supreme Court heard a case where a man had been convicted of abuse for whipping his wife severely with a narrow tree branch or switch. The skin on Ms. Rhodes' back had been lacerated and she had bled extensively while begging for mercy.⁴⁵ The Supreme Court reviewed the case and decided to uphold the man's conviction for abuse on the grounds that the switch he used had been too large. The court ruled that even

⁴³ Richard Johnson, "Changing attitudes about domestic violence" *Law & Order*. Vol. 50 (2002).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

though a husband had the right to whip his wife with a switch, the man should refrain from using a switch that had the circumference larger than the circumference of his thumb. If the switch was bigger than the thumb it was considered abuse, but if it were smaller than the thumb it would be well within a man's legal right of discipline. This Rule of Thumb standard came from the English Common Law and had been adopted by most state courts across the nation during the colonial period.⁴⁶

In a time when slave cruelty was a controversial issue, several Northern abolitionists who strongly opposed such brutality had no problem using violence against their own wives.⁴⁷ Forty percent of divorces granted during the Victorian period were the result of "marital cruelty," showing that women and society were starting to become intolerant of such acts.

The Victorian period was a time of great religious following. People during the nineteenth-century believed that the Bible supported women's submission and often used biblical quotes to defend such claims. "This emphasis of religious based subordination suggested that, for a woman to be virtuous and serve God, she must follow the lead of her husband. In addition, this gave men the impression that they had a God-given right to control their wives, even if this meant through use of physical correction"⁴⁸

Nineteenth century laws also led to a woman's oppression in regard to her husband. During this time, most states enforced a common law, which stated a husband

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Michelle Nolte, "Women's Issues Then and Now – Spousal Abuse" [article online]; Available at http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~ulrich/femhist/spousal_abuse.shtml; Internet; accessed 31 July 2005.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

had the legal right to control a wife and all her possessions. Upon marriage, a woman lost control over her children, wages, all her belongings, inheritance and, in effect, herself.

Although Victorian women were still greatly oppressed, victims of domestic abuse began to gain the right to escape their spouse's violent control. During the 1850's, several states in America began to liberalize their divorce laws. As a result, women could now obtain a divorce based on marital cruelty.⁴⁹ However, even with this progress, the laws were strict and had to meet the court's standards of "legal cruelty." Not all instances of violence were considered abuse. According to the new laws, abuse had to be habitual, life threatening, and could not be provoked as a result of the wife misbehaving. *Joyner v. Joyner* 59 N.C. 322 (1962) is a good example of this belief. Mrs. Joyner sued for divorce because her husband had hit her with a horsewhip along with other physical and psychological abuse. The court held that violence toward a wife was acceptable unless she was pregnant or the violence occurred in a public place. The Bible was quoted. The reason for the violence was held to be very important. If Mrs. Joyner was disobedient or called Mr. Joyner a liar, it was considered sufficient for a husband to use physical violence to correct his wife. To justify this conclusion, the court included the fact that the husband was responsible for criminal acts of the wife, as well as stating she could not own property under her own name. *State v. Black*, two years later stated that

A husband is responsible for the acts of his wife, and he is required to govern his household, and for that purpose the law permits him to use towards his wife such a degree of force as is necessary to control an unruly temper and make her behave herself; and unless some permanent injury be inflicted, or there be an excess of

⁴⁹ Ibid.

violence, the law will not invade the domestic forum or go behind the curtain. (Bonsignore et al 1998:10)⁵⁰

In 1882, Maryland passed the first law that declared domestic assault as a punishable crime. A powerful women's rights movement created a great magnitude of change in the latter half of the 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s in the views of society and the courts. The primary focus and goals of the women's rights movement was to secure the woman's right to vote. Along with the right to vote, the women began to ask for equal education, equal employment and to end abuse at the hands of their husbands and fathers. Eventually law would be adopted that would give women the right to vote and protect their rights to equal employment, equal education and protection from abuse at home. Finally in 1874, the state courts began to express a different view of domestic violence. "In the case of *State v. Oliver*, the North Carolina Supreme Court finally set a new precedent in holding that a husband has not right to use violence against his wife. In the decision, Justice Settle wrote: It is difficult to conceive how a man who has promised upon the altar to love, comfort, honor, and keep a woman can lay rude and violent hands upon her."⁵¹ Although the women's rights movement caused great social change in the late 1800s; women were still beaten routinely by their husbands, boyfriends, and fathers. At this time, however, it was no longer socially acceptable.

By the middle part of the nineteenth century, changes in the social religious attitudes regarding violence in the home began to shift. Part of this was due to the Second

⁵⁰ J. E. Bonsignore, *Before the Law: An Introduction to the Legal Process* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

⁵¹ Johnson, "Changing attitudes about domestic violence."

Great Awakening, a “high tide of humanitarian reform”⁵² Everything from diet and dress to the social structure itself—even the family and motherhood—were up for critical review.

People moving from the farm to the city also had an impact, which resulted in exposure of races and ethnic groups to one another. This brought a new social climate. Later in the century, it would lead to the abolition of slavery, child labor laws, temperance efforts, educational reform, and the first efforts toward women’s rights.⁵³ As a part of this social and religious movement, the laws that had provided official protection for abuse in the family slowly began to disappear. The influential British intellectual John Stuart Mill denounced the abusive treatment he saw in the family, particularly as it was directed toward the woman. In 1868, he said: “The law of servitude in marriage is a monstrous contradiction to all the principles of the modern world. . . . How vast is the number of men . . . who a little more than brutes (yet are) able, through the laws of marriage, to obtain a victim, the breadth and depth of human misery caused in this shape alone by the institution swells to something appalling.”⁵⁴ The entire negative reactions and legal actions did not eliminate the problem of violence in the family. Yet by the end of the nineteenth century some portions of Western society began to see such abuse as fundamentally inappropriate.

The legal system, police, and the communities viewed domestic violence as a family problem during the early 1900s. Citizens would tend to disassociate with the men who regularly beat their wives and children, but would not call the police unless the

⁵² S.E. Ahlstrom, *A religious history of the American people Vol. 2* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1975).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Martin, *Counseling for family violence and abuse*.

violence was severe, caused a loud disruption in the neighborhood or was committed in public. When the police were contacted, the officers usually tried to calm the family down and negotiate a peaceful resolution to the dispute. If one of the parties was acting irrationally and could not be reasoned with, he or she was usually sent away for the evening. Many times, the officers referred the couple to their families or their local clergymen for marital counseling. Sometimes the abuser was arrested when he or she had caused serious bodily to the victim, or had been antagonistic toward the officers. In these cases, the abuser would be taken to jail and made to appear in front of the judge. However, the result was usually that the abuser was made to pay a small fine or the charges were dropped. Usually the abuser was not taken to jail so much because of the abuse but because he or she was uncooperative. In the courtroom, the judge would usually see a sober and repentant man who appeared to love his family, but had simply let his temper get out of hand. Many times, the victim would go to court and ask for mercy for the abuser. Convictions were almost nonexistent. The criminal justice system accepted the fact that family violence was a problem, it just was not deemed to be a problem for the courts.

After World War II, college students brought an expansion of college research activities into the social sciences. One of the social problems that was studied was family violence. Sociological studies by Richard Gelles, Murray Strauss and others revealed that domestic violence was common in homes across the nation but rarely seen in public. These studies also identified the link between growing up in an abusive home and the likelihood of participation in criminal behavior later in life for the children. They documented the physical injury to millions of American woman each year as a result of domestic violence.

These studies found that most people involved in domestic violence were not just guys who lost their tempers. Domestic violence was found to be a pattern of violence that was consistent for the purpose of manipulation of power and control.

As American society began to change its attitude toward family violence, the criminal justice system followed. Two major events brought this change. One was the implementation of the Law Enforcement Education Program (LEEP) in 1970.⁵⁵ Federal funding and legislation around 1970 placed new requirements on municipal and state police departments to adhere to certain standards of professionalism. Another requirement was to require that all full time officers completed certified police academy training. After 1970, police academies became a norm for all officers. Police academy training raised the professional education levels of officers nationwide. These trained officers began to approach family violence with a more professional law enforcement attitude.⁵⁶ In the 1980s, the most frequent type of call for the police continued to be domestic disputes. The assaults on officers, injuries and homicide rate at domestic violence calls remained high. The women maimed and killed by domestic violence also remained high. Agencies continued to try the same techniques that had been used for hundreds of years. This was to counsel the parties and attempt to negotiate peace or send one of the parties away for the evening to cool off or sober up. Officers would find themselves returning to the same addresses again and again often in the same evening. The National Institute of Justice and the Minneapolis Police conducted a study to determine the most effective actions an officer could take to resolve a domestic violence call. The results of this study were that

⁵⁵ Johnson, "Changing attitudes about domestic violence."

⁵⁶ Ibid.

strict law enforcement was the most effective means of dealing with domestic disputes. Arresting the abuser for probable cause resulted in fewer repeat calls. Comparable studies were made in other states with similar results.

With this new information, many police agencies joined forces with women's rights groups and community anti-violence groups. The courts were petitioned, and slowly various state legislatures began instituting legislation that made it easier for women to obtain orders of protection against their intimate partners. More pressure was put on the courts to follow through with convictions. By 1989, about half the state legislatures passed regulations limiting the arrest discretion of officers in domestic violence situations. The officer was ordered to make an arrest if any probable cause of a crime existed. As prosecutors became more educated about family violence dynamics, many came to believe that it was in the best interest of the victim to prosecute domestic batterers. Consequently, there was a push for convictions, even if the victim was uncooperative. The prosecution attorneys began to use a strategy called evidence-based prosecution. They would build their cases on the basis of independent witnesses, physical evidence and the testimonies of the investigating officers. Women's' groups, police officers and prosecuting attorneys now sought to educate judges about the effects of domestic violence.⁵⁷

Finally, the United States took a legislative stand against women being abused in 1994. This was the passage of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994. This act created national, uniform, legal standards, which created a stronger legal platform to rein in and prosecute abusers. Before this law, men could beat women in one state and put her in the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

car, drive to another state and avoid prosecution. The VAWA includes important safeguards for female victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Clergy and lay people are making themselves aware of the nature of wife abuse. There is an air of questioning and a move toward accountability in the churches. It is this writer's belief that more people have a desire to get back to the authentic teachings of Jesus Christ, which emphasized mutuality, equality, and concern for the marginalized and oppressed. Our victims of today could very well be our leaders of tomorrow. We must continue to prepare the people of God to lead others to health and wholeness that can be found in our Savior Jesus Christ.

Theological Foundation

What is theology? Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra define theology as follows:

In the classical approach still favored by many European and North American theologians, theology is the methodological investigation and interpretation of the content of Christian faith, the orderly clarification and explanation of what the Christian message affirms. From another angle, theology is an activity or function of the Christian church carried out by members of the church. It is faith seeking understanding thorough which the church in every age reflects on the basis of its existence and the content of its message. From yet another angle, theology is "faith seeking the clarity of its cause." That is, it is a reflection on Christian life amid struggles for freedom or liberation, for the full humanity of all persons, and for the transformation of human persons and societies as manifestations of and in expectation of the reign of God.⁵⁸

Other angles as they are termed by Thomas and Wondra are actually other approaches to defining theology. One of them is "faith seeking understanding" and the

⁵⁸ Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology, Third Edition* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002).

other is “faith seeking the clarity of its cause.” According to these authors, theology is an attempt to determine the true Christian faith, true doctrine from false doctrine, and true worship from false worship.⁵⁹

There are many voices in theological circles that claim to speak truth. This writer is challenged to critically analyze what culture, time span, context, and literary form brings forth the thoughts of the many voices. One would consider feminist theology for a project such as this, yet womanist theology adds another dimension with black women voices. Liberation theologians such as Gustavo Gutierrez treat salvation and liberation as inseparable. Gutierrez believes in three levels of sin and liberation. They are liberation from economic, social, and political oppression.⁶⁰ This writer has found Dr. Andrew Sung Park has done a remarkable work in his book, *From Hurt to Healing A Theology of the Wounded*. Dr. Park challenges his readers to step outside of tradition, where we have had only the language of sin to describe very different predicaments. We have offered but one solution to the problem, the two-way transaction of God’s forgiveness, but we need to take the next step, which involves healing for the victims. Not only should we have salvation for the sinners but consider those who are in need of wholeness and peace, those who have been sinned against.

According to Dr. Park, the church’s traditional path for salvation is not the path for victims. “Instead of justification by faith, he or she needs to seek the healing of her spiritual wounds. Her final step can be jubilee or joy rather than full sanctification. If the church had provided some theological guidelines for sexual abuse victims, their wounds

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job; God-talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 82.

could have healed without festering.” This is in response to the recent charges against the priests in the Catholic Church. In Christian theology, sin is the only category to diagnose the wrong of the world. It is time for the church to face this issue and provide a remedy for it.⁶¹ Western languages do not have a term to describe the wounds of victims. The Korean have a term to describe the deep wounds of victims: *han*. “The slow death of the spirit is *han*, Sadness, resignation, hopelessness, and despair are all parts of what *han* means.”⁶²

In the United States, domestic violence is an epidemic social problem. Experts estimate that two to four million women in this country are battered every year and that between 3.3 and ten million children witness violence in their homes. In 1999, 1,218 women were killed by current or former partners. According to the Department of Justice, nearly half of the violent crimes against women are not reported to the police. When the person to whom you have been closest violates your basic human rights, *han* is often the result.⁶³

Han is a terrible wrong done to a person. Intense rending of the soul and leaving a sense of helplessness, *han* is the rupture of the soul caused by abuse, exploitation, injustice and violence. When the soul hurts so much, it bursts symbolically; it aches. When the soul is wounded again, it suffers a deeper ache. The wound produced by such repeated abuse and injustice is *han* in the depths of the soul.⁶⁴

Our society tends to victimize victims. When someone is victimized, he or she will suffer further humiliation and degradation if the abuse is reported. In the cases of domestic

⁶¹ Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002)

⁶² Park, *From Hurt to Healing A Theology of the Wounded*.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

violence, it is usually the victim who must “prove” the assault took place, leave their home and try to protect their children from experiencing more abuse. Many times, the court system will sentence an offender to classes for anger management, yet very seldom does one hear of the courts ordering counseling for the victims. The perpetrators in the churches are always told that God will forgive them for their sins, including abuse, yet the abused is often left with emotional baggage that is killing the soul.

“The Christian doctrine of sin addresses the oppressors’ need for forgiveness, but ignores oppressed people’s need for justice and healing.”⁶⁵ The book of Job was written to contradict the retributive (or “Deuteronomistic”) theology that regards suffering as God’s punishment for sin and as a tool of God’s instruction. Job’s sons and daughters are killed, all he has is destroyed, and Job is afflicted by sores. His friends come to visit him and want him to repent of his sins. Finally God speaks to Job out of a whirlwind (38:1-40:2) God’s answer was irrelevant to Job’s suffering. God never revealed to Job that Job’s suffering was a test that God had approved. This is the *han* of many suffering victims; they do not understand why God does not make His hidden purposes known.⁶⁶ Gustavo Gutierrez says that, at first, Job views God’s justice as retribution for sin. In the end, Job understands God’s justice as God’s freedom. Gutierrez contends that divine justice is divine gratuitousness. According to him, the book of Job centers on the theme of divine justice and divine gratuitousness.⁶⁷ Justice is not always what we think of as right, but simply what God chooses to do. Job does end up confessing God’s all powerfulness and

⁶⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁷ Gutierrez, *On Job*, 82.

confessing his own weaknesses. Although Job obtains no satisfaction from his predicament, he is satisfied with seeing God personally, and ironically repents of his sin.

Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you declare to me, I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees thee; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:3b-6)

Although Job repents, we don’t know what sin he repented from. The fact that a victim should repent from his or her own wound is *han*. The word repentance is a wrong word here for Job. Job cannot repent from his pain; he can only regret it. Sin usually causes *han*; *han* then can generate more sin and more *han*. The author of Job tells us that God allowed Satan to test Job. A new type of *han* is introduced. Job’s suffering is a result of Satan’s test. This was not a test of refining or punishment. The test was to show that Job would worship God in the face of adversity. Satan claimed that Job praises and worships God because it is beneficial. Here Satan gives a warning to the theology of glory, which underpins the notion that we worship God for our own benefits. “A distorted Protest theology asserts that we believe in God because God benefits us. The real meaning of the doctrine of justification is that whether or not God benefits us, we believe in God: “Though he slays me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15 KJV). “Our faith itself is an end not a means to an end. By faith we wait for the God who never seems to come.” Our trust or belief is not a bargaining chip with God. Our faith itself is an end, not a means to an end.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Park, *From Hurt to Healing A Theology of the Wounded*, 20.

There are two types of *han*, the *han* caused by sin and the *han* caused by evil. Job was not a victim of sin but a victim caused by evil.⁶⁹ Evil not being an absolute concept but a relative one. Evil might be interpreted as the privation of good (Plotinus, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas) For Simone Weil, evil consists of sin and suffering “Evil is neither suffering nor sin; it is both at the same time, it is something common to them both. For they are linked together; sin makes us suffer and suffering makes us evil, and this indissoluble complex of suffering and sin is the evil in which we are submerged against our will, and to our horror.”⁷⁰ Sin does not involve the evil of Job’s suffering, rather evil involves the *han* that Job experiences. Job’s question is more fully answered in the New Testament. *Han* is located in the New Testament if you walk with Jesus in Palestine. The primary reason for Jesus’ coming into the world was to bring good news to the afflicted and the sinned-against. Jesus said, “Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous but sinners,” (Mk. 2:17) Here sinners are not all sinners. There were two types of sinners in Jewish society at that time. One was a criminal who had broken civil laws; the other was a person in a lowly and unacceptable occupation. The latter can be divided into two categories; one is a sinner of dishonorable reputation, the other the sinner of low status, such as the sick and the poor. They were publicans and sinners (Mk. 2:16) prostitutes (Matt. 21:32) or the sick, they were just called sinners (Mk. 2:17; Lk. 7: 37, 39). From the time of Ezra, the term was used to designate a lower class of people who were ignorant of the law, unable to perform their religious duties, i.e. observing the Sabbath or the law of purification. Jesus came into the

⁶⁹ Simone Weil, *From Random Thoughts on the Love of God, The Soul is Here for Its Own Joy: Sacred Poems from Many Cultures* Ed. Robert Bly (Hopewell, NJ: Ecco, 1995), 112.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

world to take their infirmities and bear their grief (Matt. 8:17). In the eyes of Jesus, those who claimed to be righteous were the actual sinners who had to repent of their sin of self-righteousness, religious persecution, and ostentation. In contrast to the religious leaders and scribes, Jesus invited the *han*-ridden, the despised, sick and the poor to his rest (Matt. 11:28).⁷¹

At Capernaum, four men brought a paralytic to Jesus by lowering him through the roof on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus healed the man by saying “My son, your sins are forgiven.” This man may have had a sin consciousness because during this time most people believed that sickness was the result of sin. Sin requires repentance, without repentance sin cannot be resolved. This mans’ sins were forgiven without the confession of sins or repentance of sin. This indicates that he had committed no sin of which to repent. Consequently, Jesus asked which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or pick up your mat and walk. To the man, saying your sins are forgiven was much easier to understand and accept than get up and go home.⁷² Jesus also healed a blind man and disputed the explanation of human suffering (Jn. 9: 1-41). Jesus opened up a new interpretation of suffering—the suffering of victims.⁷³

It is the *han*-ridden sin that afflicts victims of domestic violence. One that society has shunned due to their oppression and poverty of spirit. It is the guilt-ridden victim that the ministers have yet to understand.⁷⁴ The ones whose black eyes and shame do not

⁷¹ Park, *From Hurt to Healing, A Theology of the Wounded*, 23-24.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

always allow them to perform their religious duties. These victims have many times taken vows to stay in a covenant relationship in a church that cannot understand the anguish of their souls. This *han* can only be resolved by the healing of those who have been sinned against. There needs to be accountability for the sinners, along with salvation, but with the confession there should also be repentance from the sin of abuse. Victims of violence suffer from shame and humiliation. We must remember that it was the shame of the crucifixion that turned many people away from believing that Jesus was the Messiah. Victims of violence are often mistrusted, distanced and blamed for their victimization. Jesus' crucifixion represents the inexpressible *han* of innocent victims.⁷⁵

Two myths have become mainline thought processes in our cultures. One is that the man has a right to abuse his wife. The second one is that the woman must like it because she has not left the man. Neither of these concepts is true. First and foremost, Jesus never condoned abuse, but rather acted against it. The concept that some people have, believing the abused person likes it, does not take into consideration that often the woman has no place to go, no job security, or economic resources beyond that of her spouse. All these are forms of power in a relationship that can be used as tools of negotiation and prevent the woman from leaving. We have come to a place in our society where we do not believe that these tools exist for an abused person.⁸⁵ The victim is usually forced to be socially isolated from their family. Personal distress will also keep a victim in an abusive relationship. Women suffering abuse also suffer depression, somatic illness, suicide attempts and alcohol or drug abuse. "If we would stand against violence toward women, we must rethink not only our cultural acceptance of violence, but also our

⁷⁵ Ibid.

ideas about suffering, selflessness, and martyrdom” is the cry from the heart of Melinda Contreras-Boyd.⁷⁶

How did these traditional patterns of gender and sexual relationship arise in the first place? During the first four centuries of the Common Era, when the Christian movement became a defiant sect and transformed itself into the religion of the Roman Empire, there was a departure from pagan practices and Jewish tradition. “By the beginning of the fifth century, Augustine had actually declared that spontaneous sexual desire is the proof of—and penalty for—universal original sin, an idea that would have baffled most of his Christian predecessors to say nothing of his pagan and Jewish contemporaries.”⁷⁷ After the conversion of the emperor Constantine in 303, Christianity became the official religion of the empire. Augustine, one of the greatest teachers of western Christianity, derived from the story of Adam and Eve that sexual desire is so sinful that infants are infected from the moment of conception with the disease of original sin and that Adam’s sin corrupted the whole of nature itself.⁷⁸

A young man or woman in classical Greek and Roman society who refused to marry a person chosen by his or her family would be considered insubordinate or possibly even insane. Many parents expected their daughter to marry at the age of puberty and their sons by the age of 17 to 25 years old. The men were then expected to place themselves at the service of their communities. Anyone who chose to go a solitary way and withdrawal

⁷⁶ Melinda Contreras-Byrd, “A Living Sacrifice,” *The Other Side* Vol. 38, No. 2, 2002 [magazine online]; available at <http://www.theotherside.org/archive/mar-apr02/contreras-byrd.html>; Internet; accessed 31 July 2005.

⁷⁷ Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), xviii.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

risked ostracism: in Greek, the word “idiot” literally referred to someone concerned only with personal or private matters instead of the public and social life of the public community. Jesus brought the message that attacked these assumptions. “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life.” (Matt. 16:25) Jesus himself belonged to the tradition of Jewish people who for many centuries had lived in groups of outsiders. These outsiders seemed to reject the view that human value depends on ones’ contribution to the state. Late in the West, the idea came about that each individual possessed intrinsic, God-given value and worth apart from any social contradiction.⁷⁹

Augustine would eventually transform traditional Christian teaching on freedom, sexuality, sin and redemption for all future generations of Christians. Earlier generations of Jews and Christians found in Genesis 1-3 the affirmation of human freedom to choose good or evil. Augustine, living after the age of Constantine, found in the same text a story about human bondage.⁸⁰ How did Augustine’s teaching on original sin become the center for Western Christian tradition? What significance do the views that were embraced have on victims of domestic violence? Let’s explore what was going on at the time and see. Christians found themselves under Constantine and his Christian successors, the emperor’s brothers and sisters. Augustine's theories made religious sense to the new political realities. Everyone now agreed that the story of Adam and Eve offered a basic paradigm for ordering human society. Although Augustine claimed not to have control over his own will, he later admitted to not understanding his own free will.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 80-81.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 100.

That Adam's sin brought suffering and death upon humankind most Christians like their Jewish predecessors would have taken for granted. Most Jews and Christians would have also agreed that Adam left each of his offspring the freedom of choice in choosing good or evil. Yet Augustine did not believe in free moral choice and chose to argue that every human being is in bondage, not only from birth but also at the moment of conception.⁸¹

Augustine concludes that a husband is meant to rule over the wife as the spirit is to rule over the flesh. Although created equal, due to the woman being created from the man's rib, she is the weaker part of the human couple. Woman who was created to be man's helper became his temptress and led him into disaster.⁸²

We can hear the same thought process when domestic violence is present. The man that abuses his wife will usually blame her for the abuse. The sad part is that the woman continues to try to change something in her to change the situation. The fact of the matter is that the woman cannot change anything in her to stop the abuse, simply because history has shown that a person who abuses will continue to abuse regardless of what changes, except himself.

The vision of wholeness, which is the supreme, will of the biblical God, is the outgrowth of a covenant of "shalom," in which persons are bound not only to God but to one another in a caring, sharing, rejoicing community with none to make them afraid"⁸³ In Isaiah we are told how the Lord suffered for us so that we can be restored to wholeness. "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men

⁸¹ Ibid., 109.

⁸² Ibid., 114.

⁸³ Walter Brueggemann, *Living Toward A Vision* (Philadelphia, PA: United Church Press, 1976), 9.

hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. (Isa. 53:4-5).

There is literature to be found written by theologians in contrast to this scripture who believe that women accept abuse believing the abuse to be justified by suffering because of the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ. The crucifixion has been labeled as divine child abuse. Mary Daly argues that the imitation of this savior is exactly what is desired:

The qualities that Christianity idealizes, especially for women, are also those of a victim: sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humility, meekness, etc. Since these are the qualities idealized in Jesus “who died for our sins,” his functioning as a model reinforces the scapegoat syndrome for women.”⁸⁴

Many women, however, although conscious of the church’s contribution to suffering, do not leave. “Feminist theologians who attempt to rework the tradition by finding feminist undercurrents and countercultures doing new quests for the historical feminist Jesus, and writing women back into the Bible and tradition (the Inclusive Language Lectionary is a good example) are trying valiantly to “fix” the institution so that they can remain in it”⁸⁵ There is a claim that Christianity has been—in many women’s lives—the primary force in shaping acceptance of abuse. “The central image of Christ on the cross as the savior of the world communicates the message that suffering is redemptive, the best person who ever lived gave his life for others, then, to be of value we

⁸⁴ Ibid., 109.

⁸⁵ Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, “For God So Loved the World? Theology and Abuse: Women’s Experience” [article online]; available at www.fie.edu/forgod.htm; Internet; accessed 24 March, 2004.

should likewise sacrifice ourselves.”⁸⁶ These authors believe that the women who stay in the church are just as much victimized and abuse as any battered woman. “Despite all the correctives taught by liberation theology on how to interpret suffering, this Christian theology with atonement at the center still encourages martyrdom and victimization.”⁸⁷ The claim is whether Christianity in essence frees or imprisons is the issue that must be considered.

Actually, it is the Old Testament that portrays the most violence against women, not the New Testament. Violence against women is usually cast in sexual terms. Women were punished with rape, beatings, exposure of their private parts, and mutilation of their bodies—usually at the hands of men who were related to them (Jephthah’s daughter in Jdg. 13; the virgin daughter of Gibeah and the Levite’s concubine in Jdg. 19, Tamar in 2 Sam. 13). “The correlation drawn repeatedly in prophetic literature between divine judgment and husbands battering their wives is haunting and telling. It suggests that as far back as the days of biblical writings women in love were women in trouble.”⁸⁸ The prophets have portrayed God as a devoted, but also a jealous husband. The marriage metaphor concerns not just to convey the character of God’s relation with God’s people but also in the larger cultural context of imagining the power that sustains and structures a society. Hebrew women were well aquatinted with this world of brutality, rape, and subjugation that the marriage metaphor assumes. Male dominance in the Old Testament was assumed, it was not questioned. This is a world where it was conceivable that women

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Renita J. Weems, *Battered Love, Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1992), 2.

would be made to marry their rapists, and possibly have to reconcile with husbands that battered and mutilated their bodies.⁸⁹ Many readers have been socialized by the marriage metaphor. We have been taught to identify with intense anti-woman sentiments found in most classic literature, including the Bible. In reading the classic texts in Western literature, one must be willing to identify with male interests and values and not question the absence of strong women or notice that those who are strong end up killed, branded, or left insane. It is not odd that women find their identity in marriage. The scene of a subdued wife and a conquering husband is a familiar scene in Western literature.⁹⁰ How women are socialized clearly defines many of their roles in society.

But social conditioning to a male perspective accounts for only a part of the reason why readers see in marriage the epitome of the divine-human bond. We have also been taught to identify with the metaphor's utopian vision of romance and reconciliation. The portrait of the reconciled husband and wife caters to what we have all been taught to believe in—the strength of the family and the power of love. In its own misguided and disturbing way the marriage metaphor expresses that love triumphs in the end over catastrophe and destruction. The metaphor reassures us that love conquers all and that marriage is forever. No matter how bad things get in a marriage, there is always a possibility that love can be rekindled, vows renewed, and the marriage restored. Here, the betrayed forgives the betrayer the battered forgives the batterer, and everyone lives happily ever after.⁹¹

In the book of Hosea, the image of the battered but romanced wife is cleverly deployed. In Hosea, one will find the emotion evinced in the oracles of destruction (Hos. 2:1-13) matches the emotion evinced in the oracles of deliverance and salvation (Hos. 2:14-23). In the first half the husband is looking at his wife's death, in the second half their

⁸⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 89.

⁹¹ Ibid.

reconciliation. Despite their differences, in the end love prevails and mutuality prevails over mutilation.⁹²

This is not the theme of the New Testament. Let us take another look at what Andrew Park has to say concerning faith for those who have been victimized. There are two meanings of faith. One for those who have sinned, the other for those who have been sinned against. The faith of sinners rests on God's mercy; the faith of those sinned against rests on God's fairness. "The faith of sinners aims at divine acceptance and validation, while the faith of those sinned against points to divine verdict and vindication."⁹³ The first phase of faith comes from Paul's epistle to the Romans,

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith;
as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live"⁹⁴

Paul quotes this scripture from Habakkuk (2:4). For Paul, it meant trusting in the redeeming power of Jesus. This is the faith that is connected to justification. In the book of Habakkuk, faith meant waiting. (2:2-4). For Habakkuk faith was to wait for the vindication of the wronged, God's judgment on the wicked. Faith is connected to justice here not justification.

In the New Testament, we see in the book of Hebrews the heroes of faith. Moses opted to take the ill treatment with his people. Others were tortured refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection (Heb. 11:35).

Ultimately Jesus was "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross" (Heb 12:2), Jesus' faith endured, not so that he might secure his

⁹² Ibid., 92-93.

⁹³ Park, *From Hurt to Healing A Theology of the Wounded*, 104.

⁹⁴ Romans 1:17

own justification, but that he might achieve the vindication of the sinned against: "Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart" (Heb. 12:3). Their faith was the "assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Like Jesus, they did not seek their own justification; rather, their faith gave them courage to trust in the verdict and justice of God. For the injured, faith in justice pursues humanization. Such a faith is the foundation of resistance for the wounded.⁹⁵

Can God pardon and justify oppressors apart from repentance? The Bible addresses this:

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23-24)

Let us look in the book of Luke at one who was a sinner and how he responded to the call of salvation in the book of Lk.19:1-10. When people saw that Jesus had gone to the house of a sinner, they murmured against him. Zacchae'us told the Lord he would give half of what he owned to the poor and restore fourfold back to anyone he had defrauded. Jesus responded to this by claiming that today salvation has come into the house. This man had sinned against people and needed to repent and show a change of heart evidenced by his behavior. Those that Zacchae'us had sinned against were validated and what had been taken from them was restored. Those who have been victims of domestic violence cannot always be restored from the effects of the violence, yet they can be made whole and validated by the church for the wrongs that have been done to them. Jesus continued to state his purpose by saying that the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Victims of domestic violence are lost in the battle they cannot win without the power and demonstration of the Spirit that can only come from the Lord.

⁹⁵ Park, *From Hurt to Healing A Theology of the Wounded*, 107.

“Justification by faith does not mean that sinners can be justified without the work of repentance. Rather, it means that they are justified in order to do the work of restoration. Justification occurs not when God lets sinners off the hook but when God’s grace convicts and empowers sinners to work for the rectification of their wrongs.”⁹⁶

In Malachi, we read, “The sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings” (4:2). Earlier in the book of Malachi,

And this again you do, You cover the Lord’s altar with tears with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor at your hand. You ask, “Why does he not?” Because the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, through she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life? And what does he desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let none be faithless of the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce and covering ones garments with violence, says the lord of hosts. So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless” (Malachi 3:13-16)

Violence, although it may be portrayed as a metaphor to get the attention of the people, has never been what the Lord desired to happen in covenant relationships.

In the Hebrew Bible, Nehemiah said,

And I looked, and arose, and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, do not be afraid of the, Remember the LORD, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughter, your wives, and your homes.” (Neh. 4:14)

As the walls of Jerusalem were broken down in the days of Nehemiah, so are the walls of our families broken down today. Can we, like Nehemiah weep and fast and pray before the God of heaven? Nehemiah did not just weep for himself, but he wept and prayed for the people who had sinned against God. Nehemiah went to the king (who would represent those in authority today) and collaborated with the king. As Nehemiah

⁹⁶ Ibid., 106-107.

had a vision for the work that was set before him, so must we weep, pray, and fast for the pain of others and ask the LORD to show us what needs to be done. Then we will be able to tell others as Nehemiah did,

Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer disgrace. And I told them of the hand of my God, which had been upon me for good and also of the words, which the king had spoken to me, and they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. (Neh. 2:18)

We will be able to say, Come let us rise up and restore families; and with the power of God, and the direction of the Holy Spirit, we can strengthen our hands for the good work. This was not an easy work; coming against violence is never easy. Nehemiah and the people had to work under guards day and night. Nehemiah stationed the people according to their families and the weapons. (Neh. 4:13)

The church must also strategically station itself according to the families at risk, pray for wisdom and understanding and go into prayer and fasting for the deliverance of our people.

The heart of Jesus' mission was to bring good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives recovering sight to the blind, letting the oppressed go free, and proclaiming the year of Jubilee (Lk. 4:18-19). Paul's letter to Philemon was the development of Christian social consciousness. Onesimus left his master Philemon and went to Paul; Paul was known to settle disputes in the churches. Onesimus was not just corrected by Paul, but found the love of Christ in Paul and converted to Christianity (Philemon 11). Paul knew that the ministry of Jesus Christ is to heal and restore broken

people to wholeness. Luther saw, as reflected in the letter, “a masterful and tender example of Christian love,” noting that all of us are Onesimus in some way.”⁹⁷

Jesus said “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Part of this abundant life can be found in the book of Psalm “Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anoints my head with oil, my cup overflows.” (Ps.23:5) Should we not as God’s church prepare a table for those who are in oppression and help remove them from the presence of violence, which comes from the enemy? Jesus was not only concerned with the mere healing of our bodies, although that is part of the healing. One can find the ministry and mission of Jesus in Luke where Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61, “the Spirit of the lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord” (Lk. 4:16). Jesus did not only deal with physical healing but also oppression and injustice in society.

How will the Church today be a place of refuge and part of the healing community? In order for the Church to fulfill the mission statements that Jesus made, it must be relevant in the lives of people and minister to their deepest spiritual needs. In order to be relevant in the lives of people today, the Church must meet some of the soul injuries and psychological needs of the people in the community. There are many psychological breakdowns in life, the Bible has given us the substance needed to meet the needs of the communities that social and law agencies cannot. In his book *The Wounded Healer*, Henri Nouwen says, “in our own woundedness, we can become a source of life

⁹⁷ John H. Hayes, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999).

for others”⁹⁸ H. Norman Wright gives some helpful insights to the characteristics of Jesus for the Church to use in helping people effectively, His biblical approach is based on studying the life of Jesus.⁹⁹ Jesus had compassion; Jesus felt compassion for the multitude, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. (Mk. 6:34) Jesus accepted people without condemning them; Jesus gave people worth. Jesus involved himself in the lives of people who were the worst of sinners. Jesus did this by showing them their value in God’s eyes (Matt. 10:29). Jesus met people’s needs. The classic example of how Jesus responded to suffering is found in the book of Luke, known as “The Good Samaritan.” This Gospel reflects the relationship of each of us that we must have towards our suffering neighbor.

In his book *A Love Supreme*, Callahan presents a history of the Johanne Tradition. He expounds on the New Testament Epistles 1, 2, and 3 John as well as the gospel of John to show the footprints that mark the path of ancient community. Callahan claims the message that “God is light” is an ethical statement. “The original message is one of justice: Everyone who is not doing what is just, that is not loving his brother is not of God” (1 John 3:10).¹⁰⁰ The classic example of this brotherly agape is taken from the Primeval History of Genesis, the history of all nations, where Abel murdered Cain and received special attention. The world was created with divine love and arranged in keeping with people’s good deeds. The Elder defines the practice of love. “Oh children,” the Elder exclaims, “we must love neither with reasoning nor with rhetoric, but with work and with

⁹⁸ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 1979), 88.

⁹⁹ H. Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling*, (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1993).

¹⁰⁰ Allen Dwight Callahan, *A Love Supreme A history of the Johanne Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2005), 31.

truth” (3:18). Without work and truth, one defaults to hatred, to murder, to fratricide, “Reasoning,” *logos*, is pejorative here because reason and language are pointless without work and truth.¹⁰¹ Logos is not sufficient; there must be a prologos, something prior to logos. 1 John points to something that has come to pass prior to the discourse; this is what makes the logos make sense. “Reason and language are ultimately derivative: they derive from love. And without love, reason has nothing to think and language has nothing to say.”¹⁰²

This writer will show how we can put forth truth and work together for our suffering neighbors as we look at the methodology of this project. With an understanding of suffering and how to respond to those who have been sinned against, we can examine how this ministry can be made possible for the church to minister to victims of domestic violence.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Four focuses on an important need that was identified, developed into a model, and later implemented at Praise Chapel Church of God in Westland, Michigan. The methodology included the hypothesis for the model, the purpose statement, the foundation for framing the model, research design, and instruments used for data collection.

The objective of the model was to educate and equip individuals in the church to minister to victims of domestic violence. Most of the participants in the training had little knowledge about domestic violence. Without knowledge of domestic violence, one cannot minister to a person who is suffering as a result of that violence. After understanding the dynamics of the violence, one can be equipped to respond to the pain of the person who is suffering.

A context associates group was formed for this study to gain an understanding of how to meet the needs of victims of domestic violence for the purpose of this research. This team consisted of Montique Brown, Michelle LaPratt, Cindy Goins, and Jody Holbrook. The context associates helped research data on domestic violence, discover what was currently being done, and then decided as a group what material was most needed during eight training sessions. There were many meetings to define goals and objectives, program forms, and needs assessment. We met to discuss and discover what the church could offer that was not being offered by agencies with services for victims of

domestic violence. We discussed the importance of the biblical concepts that were lacking in many of the programs. We continuously sought different ideas for bringing a victim to wholeness in meeting their physical, emotional, economic and spiritual needs.

The context associates met several times to discuss the most important subject matter for the training sessions. Domestic violence affects people in the church as well as outside the church. Yet, this is a subject rarely spoken about from the pulpit. This ministry is needed because, when presented with the problem, most people do not know what to do. Many people in the church have preconceived ideas concerning marriage. Some of these ideas include:

- one should not divorce because marriage is a covenant relationship
- the marriage should continue because there are children
- this is a private matter that the church should not address

It is this writer's belief that domestic violence is an issue that cries out to be heard by the church. The problem, as it was stated at the beginning of this chapter, concerned laity not being educated and equipped to minister to victims of domestic violence. The Church has been silent on this issue that has crossed all races, genders, and cultures. This study evaluated the Ministry of Excellence Model by testing how effective it was in proving the hypothesis: How can the Ministry of Excellence Model help the Churches minister to victims of domestic violence?

The professional associates were Dr. Ned Adams, Dr. Jerrolynn Johnson, and Dr. Sharon Marshall. Dr. Adams guided me on a journey throughout the biblical lands and, through his eyes, allowed me to see scripture in ways I had never before imagined. Dr. Johnson offered much insight in designing and implementing the project. Dr. Marshall made herself my literary ear and showed me many constructive ways to make changes for

the better for this project. All three of these professional associates labored with love and continued to give their time unselfishly. Some time was spent over a period of months with Reverend Dr. Sharon Ellis of Chicago Illinois who has a support group in her church for victims of domestic violence. Investigator Patricia Lofton from the Sixth Precinct in Detroit, Michigan was interviewed in person as well as on the phone on several occasions. Data was collected from First Step, an agency that advocates for victims of domestic violence. On three occasions, this writer spoke with police officers from the Sixth Precinct on the crisis of a domestic violence dispute.

Additional research was conducted on victims of domestic violence. This writer discovered Dr. John Kie Vining, an author and counselor who did his doctoral study of domestic violence more in the area of healing. Dr. Vining serves as the Director of Counseling at the Church of God Center for Ministerial Care and the Coordinator of Family Ministries for the Church of God. Dr. Vining has written ten books. The material for this project, such as *Silent Suffering*, *Silent Shame*, was obtained and used in the training sessions for the laity. Dr. John Vining generously shared his time and books with me. More about our meetings on this project is presented in the Timeline (Appendix E).

This writer was the primary counselor at Praise Chapel Church of God in Westland, Michigan. However, before this project, there was no ministry team for this type of ministry. There are usually many ministry teams in most churches, but ministering to victims of domestic violence is rarely found among them.

Prior to the model's implementation, groundwork requiring extensive exploration and planning was completed in order to establish the foundation for framing the model. This groundwork consisted of researching what was and was not already available. The foundation and framing of the model started internally by looking within the local

churches. The search was to find what kind of ministries, if any, were already in existence. Next, an external view was needed to explore how other agencies and institutions serviced victims of domestic violence.

Methodology For The Model

My hypothesis for the project was:

How can I improve the different cultural communications with respect for the differences in people, by focusing on the issue of ministering to victims of domestic violence, and to break down some barriers that have limited the involvement of the church in this area, in an attempt to make disciples and improve the community?

The method used for formulating the design of the model was qualitative and quantitative research. Most of this research was qualitative because the design was based on the experiences of individuals as they were trained in the setting of the church.

Qualitative research was used for the design, development, and implementation of this study. "Qualitative research will be employed due to the procedures of an emerging design based on experiences of individuals within a natural setting."¹

The instruments used to evaluate the model's effectiveness were: pre and post training questionnaires (Appendix B), surveys (Appendix C), and storytelling.

Those who were involved in designing the instruments were the author, Sheila Brown, three context associates, Montique Brown, Cindy Goins, and Jody Holbrook, and one Professional Associate, Dr. Sharon Marshall, Adjunct Professor at Ashland Theological Seminary. The training sessions were conducted at Praise Chapel Church of

¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994), 99.

God in Westland, Michigan. One of the classrooms in the church was used to conduct the training sessions.

A letter was sent to approximately sixty women in the church (Appendix A). There were also announcements made on two consecutive weeks (December 25, 2004 and January 2, 2005) announcing the upcoming training sessions. Those who wanted to participate were asked to fill out the bottom half of the letter and to make a commitment to attend all eight training sessions. All who wanted to participate were asked to return the forms by January 2, 2005.

The training sessions were planned to last an hour and a half in length. It was decided to hold the training sessions on Thursday evenings from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This is the night Praise Chapel Church of God holds their mid-week services. Other nights were considered, but, because childcare would be provided on Thursdays, we decided to meet on Thursdays. Each session began with Scripture and prayer and ended with time for comments and prayer.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The churches have been silent on the suffering of victims of domestic violence throughout history. It is the researcher's belief that Jesus came to save all who were oppressed by the enemy. There have been different views concerning violence in the home, when and when not to intervene, and what if anything can be done when the sin is taking place in the privacy of a person's home. The researcher's concept here is very simple—sin is sin. The church should not condone sin regardless of where it takes place. The church's response to those who have been sinned against should be to be a sanctuary, a place that provides refuge.

How can educating and equipping laity to minister to victims of domestic violence help those who have been victimized? This ministry model provides eight training sessions to equip and educate those who have a desire to help victims of domestic violence. The training of the laity began January 6, 2005 and ended February 24, 2005.

These training sessions were conducted at Praise Chapel Church of God in Westland, Michigan. Seven people responded to the letters and announcements. Only six of the respondents continued to come to the training session, one dropped out after the first training session, therefore, their data was not used. The participants were observed in their natural setting of ministry and had a chance to share their perceptions. There were pre-training questionnaires and post-training questionnaires given before and after the

training. There were also ten women surveyed from a center in Detroit, Michigan that helps women overcome their challenges in life. There are also stories from three women who revealed what happened in their lives. For the purpose of this study, qualitative and quantitative research analysis will be used to provide the results.

Before this training began, there was another training scheduled and, after five sessions, the researcher and the context associates decided not to continue due to lack of attendance. The participants that were in this previous training session were not able to remain committed to attending the sessions for different reasons. Due to the excessive absences, the researcher and context associates did not think the data would be complete enough to validate. When it was decided by the focus group to abort the five weeks and start again, there were a couple meetings spent determining what would make the training better and how to ensure that those who wanted to participate would follow through. It was decided to open the training up to whoever wanted to attend and ask for commitments in writing (Appendix A). A couple weeks were spent announcing the training from the pulpit during Sunday morning services and putting the upcoming event in the church bulletin. This endeavor yielded seven participants. All participants but one did stay committed to attending the training sessions.

Training Sessions

The training sessions began January 6, 2005 and ended February 24, 2005. Along with the Ministry of Excellence Model, this writer composed questions for a survey with the context associates (Appendix C). Ten women were surveyed. This survey was given at a center in Detroit, Michigan. This center is a biblically-based program that helps men and women overcome their challenges in life. These challenges include drugs, alcohol,

depression and other psychological issues. Nine of the ten women had been involved in domestic violent relationships.

Also included as data for this researcher's model was storytelling of the accounts of three women who have been involved in domestic violence relationships. These three women are all involved in a Christian program or Christian counseling

Triangulation research says you must have three databases in order to say something. The three databases used were the pre-training and post-training questionnaires, the surveys, and the storytelling. Domestic violence was found in each area mentioned. However, the purpose was not for discovery, but for education and equipping for ministry for what we know already exists.

On January 6, 2005 the first training session began. We opened with prayer. It was explained that these training sessions were part of a doctoral project and the importance of attendance, participation, and honesty. The six participants then filled out the pre-training questionnaire. We viewed the video *Silent Suffering . . . Silent Shame*.¹ The Four Agreements were discussed. The Four Agreements emphasized that they could only do the best they could with what they had to work with. The purpose of these agreements was to help the participants understand that they are not responsible for how everything turns out and that it was most important that they do the best they can. There was discussion on how important it was that one keeps their word to build trust in relationships where a lot of trust has already been betrayed. There was time for questions and comments. We closed in prayer.

¹ *Silent Suffering . . . Silent Shame*, 19 min., Department of Women's Ministries, Church of God International, videocassette.

The pre-training questionnaire asked, "How old are you?" The mean age for the participants was 38.5 years old. All the participants were Caucasian in race.

Question # 1 asked to define domestic violence, five of the participants agreed that violence was mental, physical, and emotional. Only one participant thought violence was only physical.

Question # 2 asked what was their current knowledge of domestic violence? One replied she was a survivor of it (there will be more concerning this later). Four did not have any current knowledge and one claimed it could exist in any home.

Question # 3 asked why did they think violence occurred? Two of the responses stated they did not know. Three answered that insecurity was the reason domestic violence occurred. One person added it was a learned behavior.

Question #4 asked what measures could be taken to prevent domestic violence, if any? Two stated awareness, two said leave, one claimed she didn't think you could prevent it, and one claimed you should stay away from it.

Question #5 asked how might one know if someone is a victim of domestic violence? Five thought a person's actions would reveal it, one thought you could tell from black eyes and bruises.

Question # 6 asked if they thought a victim should remain in a relationship if he/she is being abused? Three said no, two said it depends and one said not if the person couldn't change.

Question #7 asked what does scriptures have to say about domestic violence? One said do unto others as you would have them do unto you; one said men should love their wives as they love Jesus and the church; one said it is not God's will for anyone to be controlled by others, and three said they did not know.

Question #8 asked what they thought the church's response should be to domestic violence? One said bad, it doesn't line up with God's word; one said they need to be aware it exists and find counsel to help them; two said minister to all parties; two said they did not know.

Question # 9 asked them to list three things they would like to learn about domestic violence? All six responded more knowledge and awareness.

On January 13, 2005 we met for the second session and began with Scripture and prayer. The participants read and signed the Domestic Violence Confidentiality and Privacy Contract (Appendix D). There was a discussion on breaking the silence and the power of naming² (Appendix D). We also discussed meeting a person in their aloneness³ (Appendix D). The discussion was then focused on the art of listening, what to say and what not to say.⁴ (Appendix D). There were questions and comments and we closed in prayer.

On January 20, 2005 we met for the third training session and opened with Scripture and prayer. We spent time discussing the Power and Control Wheel⁵ (Appendix D). This handout helped to explain the cycle of violence and how the victim is treated which helps to keep him/her a victim. We spent some time discussing the victimization process⁶ (Appendix D). There are three phases to the victimization process. This process shows what happens after repeated abuse. Fear is a great factor in this process and not

² Carol A. Adams, *Woman Battering* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 28-31.

³ David Ferguson and Bruce Walker, *Relational First Aid* (Austin, TX: Intimacy Press, 2001), 9-13.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ John K. Vining, *When Home is Where the Hurt Is* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1997), 75.

⁶ JAB/FS The Victimization Process, (author unknown) (visual of cycle).

usually taken into account to the proper extent in understanding the process of abuse. We read Scripture from Genesis 2:24 and discussed the definition of the soul (Appendix D). The topics discussed were Soul Ties and Toxic Shame. There was a time for questions and comments and then we closed in prayer.

On January 27, 2005 we met for the fourth training session, opening with Scripture and prayer. We read from the text in Leviticus 26: 6-13 and expounded on the word “liberation.” We spent time discussing what needs are to be met ⁷ (Appendix D) and offering hope with God ⁸ (Appendix D). There was time for questions and comments and we ended with prayer.

On February 3, 2005 we met for the fifth training session and opened with Scripture and prayer. We spent time discussing how to accept other people’s decisions without judging the person. The emphasis of this question was to help one decide whether or not he or she would continue to spend time ministering to an individual if the person does not make the decisions he or she thinks the person should make. In domestic violence, it is very hard to break the cycle of violence, be financially secure, or feel spiritually comfortable with leaving a spouse. Our discussion continued with how Jesus responded to people ⁹ (Appendix D) and the effectiveness of Jesus’ ministry ¹⁰ (Appendix D). There was time given for questions and comments and we closed with prayer.

⁷ Ferguson and Walker, *Relational First Aid*, 23-29.

⁸ Vining, Gernert, and Lemmert, *Silent Suffering . . . Silent Shame*, 119-135.

⁹ Wright, *Crisis Counseling*, 43-47.

¹⁰ Ibid.

On February 10, 2005 we met for the sixth training session and opened with Scripture and prayer. We discussed how to network and explore options. The purpose of this assignment was so each participant could develop their own resource book for victims of domestic violence. This book would consist of phone numbers for shelter, law enforcement, social agencies and other options. The homework assignment was to spend the week acquiring these resources and to bring them back to the next training session to share with the other participants. We spent some time discussing our own biases that we may or may not be aware that we have. Discussion was spent on transference that happens between people and how it can become unhealthy. There was time for questions and comments and we ended in prayer.

On February 17, 2005 we met for the seventh training session, beginning with Scripture and prayer. The topics of discussion included: what Scriptures are misused, what Scriptures are appropriate, and what is the church's responsibility to victims of domestic violence. We spent time sharing the resources that had been acquired. We allowed time for questions and comments and ended in prayer.

On February 24, 2005 we met for the eighth training session by opening with Scripture and prayer. We spent some time discussing forgiveness¹¹ (Appendix D). We participated in some role plays (Appendix D) that allowed participants to get a sense of what it might be like to minister to a victim of domestic violence. We completed the post questionnaires (Appendix D) and ended in prayer.

The results from the post-questionnaires were as follows: Question #1 asked them to define domestic violence. The answers were: (1) Someone overpowering another

¹¹ *Carenotes* (St. Meinrad, IN: Abby Press, 1989).

person with words, strength, action, emotional with violence; (2) Usually involving family relationships, usually between adults, it includes physical violence, any unwanted touching, throwing objects near victim and verbal threats; (3) Domestic violence is any dispute that happens between two or more people; (4) Anyone being hit, struck, punched, beaten, thrown, or anything else done against their will by another, usually husband/wife, live-in partner/ significant other; (5) Domestic violence is when the abuser hits someone, emotional abuse, sexual, could be gestures or threats; (6) Undertone, verbal assaults against that persons soul, all manner of assaults from not leaving the house, can't wear certain clothes, emotional abuse, using children as a leverage. It's just plain ugly, punching, screaming and demeaning.

Question #2 asked, what is your current knowledge of domestic violence? The answers were (1) It can be in any home, any status, children and adults; (2) Your attacker usually feels need of help, (3) It occurs usually because the abuser has deep rooted pain and anger issues that have not been properly dealt with, (4) I am a survivor/victim of domestic violence. Unfortunately it can happen at anytime, when you think the person you love is good—then three years later, ouch, (5) Violence can occur in many different ways by controlling someone, not letting them have relationships with anyone else, wants to own them so they solely depend on them. Breaking someone's personal things, not giving them privacy in the bathroom, threatening them with divorce, or taking the kids away, or even killing animals, (6) it's no respecter of persons.

Question #3 asked why do you think domestic violence occurs? The answers were (1) because people blame others for their pain and take it out on people they can control with evil patterns, the Christian community and state is usually for the violator, quick to forgive. But we have been given tools for healing the oppressed and walking with them for

the change to come. (2) He/she usually deceives others, could have been abused. It happens to people you wouldn't think of, (3) It occurs because the abuser has deep rooted pain and anger issues that have not been properly dealt with, (4) Because abusers think they are doing nothing wrong, they want to be in control and will go to great lengths not only by beating and hurting, but also by intimidation, terrorizing, emotional and physically, they think they can get away with it, (5) because the abuser has low self-esteem, been abused him/herself before, has anger issues, (6) insecurities, lack of relational know-how. Product of environment that they witnessed growing up; drugs and alcohol, lack of self-esteem, no mother, abandonment, and no father, angry.

Question #4 asked how might you know if a person is a victim of domestic violence? The answers were (1) By the way they respond in groups and the way they become fearful to been seen talking to the opposite sex or around children, (2) How they look at others or respond, (3) when the victim give "clues" to the pain they are experiencing, crying out for help, needing to talk, etc (4) by their actions, like withdrawing from others, marks on their body, they may come up and tell you, (5) because of the way they act, or what the victim might say, you have to listen for clues, (6) physical outward evidence, heart to heart talks-emotional badgering, finding out spouse wanting to leave the relationship.

Question #5 asks what measures if any can be taken to prevent domestic violence? The answers were (1) ask, make yourself willing to listen go over and get the person out of the situation, (2) look for the signs before they become too involved, (3) Nothing can be done to prevent first time abuse; help can be given when the silence is broken and it is called what it is (violence), (4) Only by their actions, like withdrawing from others, marks

on their bodies, they might come up and tell you, (5) getting to know someone's past, (6) education and self evaluation.

Question #6 asks do you think a victim should stay in a relationship if he or she is being abused? Why or why not? The answers were (1) No, because if they become unhealthy the person they love will stay the same and refusing to stay can save your life and pain before it gets worse, (2) no, remove yourself as soon as possible and get help, (3) yes and no, yes if the children are involved, but during this time preparations for escape are made, also if married one should seek help to save the marriage if mendable, divorce should be the last option if there is no way out, (4) I have recently discovered no, one should not stay, especially if children are involved. This abuse affects them even if it is indirect. They don't understand why daddy is hurting mommy. In my own situation, my son was extremely hurt by his father terrorizing his sisters. On the other hand, I understand why some women stay (and I wanted to stay) because of finances. If the women has been the homemaker and counts on his income, how does she live? (5) No, I don't think a victim should stay in a relationship if he/she is abused. Because I don't think God would want us to be abused (6) no, it will suck the life right out of a person, there is a lot to weigh in a situation like this.

Question #7 asks what does scripture have to say about domestic violence? The answers were (1) God hates it, husband love your wife, as Christ loves the church and gave Himself for it; no man hates his flesh, (2) Leviticus 26: 6 ff. I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to talk with you head high. Jesus often tells us about His peace He will give to us (3) do not break a covenant relationship, vengeance is mine, I will repay, (4) The person abusing their partner has broken the covenant, (5) If a man asks to go, let

him go. The Bible also says love your wife like Jesus loved the church; (6) Infidelity is a reason to break the marriage covenant. If he is an unbeliever, he is free to leave.

Question #8 asks the question what do you think the church's response should be to domestic violence? The answers were (1) Help stop making people feel they can live with it. God will change in prayer and God will with our help provide necessary home, money, love, and support. (2) Acceptance, pray, counsel, direction, offer hope through prayer, comfort (3) Open ear, open heart, and find someone to help them. The victim and someone else to help the abuser (if the abuser is open to it) (4) Should open their arms to both the abuser and abused. Should not turn them away saying "you need to forgive" or "Just pray about it." (5) The church should support the victim. I think the church should advise the victim to leave the abuser. (6) Embrace and educate the victim, and find help for the abuser.

Question #9 asks the participant to list three things learned about domestic violence? The answers were (1) I can't fix myself, Jesus can, violence is very much in the church, the community has the means to help the church help (2) How to help others by responding in the right way, the importance of accepting victims, information like phone numbers and the importance of naming abuse. (3) Plenty of organizations help families, power of prayer, pray on these situations, statistics say every nine seconds someone is abused, (4) How to recognize an abuser before getting into a relationship, how to help someone who is calling out for help and just needs someone to talk to; how to send the abused to the shelter etc. (5) Invading someone's privacy in the bathroom is abuse, threatening to divorce someone over and over is abuse, financial expressions can be abusive. (6) I have a lot to learn, there are different levels of abuse, and there is more to be done and to educate.

Question #10 requests the participant to recommend two things that would improve this training. The responses were (1) Maybe offer our services to a shelter, visit a shelter during class. (2) I feel the training was very good, I wouldn't mind having a refresher class. (3) Maybe a visit to a shelter and speak to enforcement. (4) Longer sessions, hands-on training and visitation to shelters and courts to see about PPO's (personal protection orders) (5) If I weren't so shy and could have found the courage to ask questions, If the class lasted longer (6) Longer than eight weeks and more role-play.

Summary

In the beginning, the Ministry of Excellence Model started with the foundation for framing the model. Those foundational principles were found in the Bible with the biblical perspective that God's will is not for people to be abused or oppressed. The foundation of this ministry was based on supportive care, concern and compassionate care to minister to the lives of those who have found themselves to be victims of domestic violence. This model rests on the principle that it is the church's responsibility to minister and care for those who are in need and crying out for help. The data collection instruments were all collected for analysis: the pre-training and post-training questionnaires, surveys, and storytelling writings.

The validity of the model was tested for its effectiveness in meeting the needs of victims of domestic violence even before the training sessions were completed. One of the participants was a victim of domestic violence and, when the participant revealed this at the last session, the other participants were able to respond with what had been learned from the training.

Experiences With The Abused

This researcher has also been present at the home of one victim several times after she has been severely abused. At one time, the police were an hour in responding to the call of the researcher even after being notified that the abuser had a gun. The researcher filed a complaint with the police department concerning the incident. The police department responded that the complaint was valid, however nothing was stated or recommended for change in the future. In discussing the procedures of follow-up on domestic violence, the police officers stated that not a lot was done because most did not follow-up with PPO's. It appears that if a crime is committed, i.e. an abuser beats a woman, the follow-up of the crime is left to a victim who is still in fear. Yet, if the same abuser beats up anyone else, even a stranger, the police follow up with prosecution based on the evidence, even if the abused is too fearful to testify.

The first experience (above) was in the city of Plymouth, Michigan; the second was in the city of Detroit, Michigan. There appears to be less police action taken in the city of Detroit. The police officers claim this is due to the high call volume for victims of domestic violence. Once an arrest has been made in a domestic violence case in the city of Detroit, there is a domestic violence unit that proceeds with the follow-up concerning prosecution.

In the October and November of 2004, this researcher met with Investigator Patricia Lofton at the Detroit Police Station (Sixth Precinct) asking questions concerning the legal process concerning domestic violence. Although the laws have changed concerning domestic violence, the researcher was informed that many of the officers did not spend a great deal of effort on these cases because the parties usually reunited. The

police officers themselves face danger because, many times, when they go to answer a call on domestic violence and try to take the abuser to jail, the victim attempts to stop the officers from arresting the abuser. Most will not show up in court.

Surveys

Ten women were surveyed at Life Challenge of Southeastern Michigan in Detroit, Michigan. This program helps men and women overcome their challenges in life. At the time of the survey, there were ten female residents at the center.

The first question asked was "Have you been involved in a relationship that involved domestic violence?" Nine out of ten of the women responded yes.

The second question was "How many?" The responses ranged from 1-7 years. The average was 3 years. So each of these nine women had an average of three relationships that involved domestic violence, one was no response.

The third question was "How long did the relationships last?" The responses were an average of three and one half years. An important note concerning this center is that this is a year-long program and the rules do not allow visits from anyone who is not their husband and/or on the approved visitor list, which is determined by staff. Boyfriends are not allowed to visit. One participant of this survey had left the abusive relationship as a result of entering the program.

The fourth question was "What help, if any, did you seek while you were in this relationship?" The responses were:

- Secular treatment center;
- Family,
- None,
- Police,
- Divorced,

- Drugs and alcohol,
- Shelter,
- Hot lines,
- Youth leaders,
- One, no response.

The fifth question was "From whom, if anyone did you seek help?" The responses were:

- Counseling from a pastor,
- Stepmother and friends,
- Mom and her church,
- Nobody,
- Counselors at shelter,
- Hotlines,
- One, no response.

The sixth question was "Were you involved with any religious groups?" The responses were:

- Yes, I was involved in church while I was in one of these relationships,
- Church,
- Mom's church occasionally,
- No,
- Yes, but they weren't involved in any way because they did not know
- Off and on
- One, no response.

The seventh question was "What was the outcome of the relationship?" The responses were:

- We are still working on our relationship, however it is very hard to trust him or fear of what will happen next;
- No longer together, it was a codependent relationship;
- Had friends that believed me, filed police report and do not know his whereabouts anymore;
- First one ended in divorce, second one has legal issues pending;
- Divorce, left him, he went to jail;
- Divorce (3 relationships);
- I broke it off;
- He went to jail for other charges;

- I left;
- One, no response.

The eighth question was “To whom would you refer someone who is in an abusive relationship?” The responses were:

- To someone they can trust,
- Hotlines were very helpful to me,
- First step (shelter);
- To someone in the church who has experience in dealing with violent issues;
- To just get out somehow, move in with someone else, stay connected with a pastor or someone you can trust so you can get all the help you need;
- To their family, pastor, or domestic violence shelters;
- Counseling, group therapy with other women, self-defense class if they cannot leave, god;
- To Jesus and common ground or a battered women’s shelter;
- God;
- To god, to a shelter, transfer out of state;
- God
- One, no response.

Storytelling

The following is storytelling the writer facilitated. Due to the subject matter, the names have not been used. These women were allowed to tell their story. These Storytellers were listed as Storytellers One, Two and Three respectively.

Storyteller One

(This woman faced more financial abuse in her first marriage, her husband worked and although she stayed home and took care of the kids and home, she was constantly under attack for the money she spent, i.e. groceries, he could always find one item they could have done without, etc. She was always being threatened with divorce.)

One evening in October, my husband came home from his counseling appointment

announcing that this was his last appointment (after only his second time going). He claimed he had accomplished what he set out to do. After asking him what that was, he said he wanted a divorce. This came as a big surprise to me because I had thought that for the first time in our marriage, I was an equal and we were communicating and getting along very well together. Not wanting to beg him to change his mind and remembering all the times that he had power over me by saying "this or that was grounds for divorce," we got divorced. We were going through the motions of divorce, but living under the same roof, I was going through a lot of emotional pain, feeling like a failure as wife, unloved, not worthy of anything or anyone. So, one weekend in February, my soon-to-be ex-husband took our two daughters with him to see his parents in Ohio, while I remained at home. My pain overwhelmed me so much that I couldn't think of other people and/or their feelings. I had hurt so bad inside that I wanted to take my own life. I had actually thought that the world would be better off without me. Thank God, that He stopped me from my plans of taking my life. I had only one plan at the time: that was to close the garage door, while I sat in the car with the motor running. I thought I could just go to sleep and never wake up again. But, the suburban, that my soon to be ex was working on, was sitting in the garage with the back end going past the door and with the engine out of it. Gratefully, I couldn't do anything. Still, feeling extremely overwhelmed in hurt and pain I called my sister. I shared with her my plans in taking my life and how I wasn't able to do it. She was thankful that the Lord had stepped in and made me promise her that I would always call her first before I do something like that again. Three months later, I went to another town to work. I met the man I had once been with before my marriage. He was the kind of person that took me out to dinner and made me feel like I was the most important person in his life. That Christmas we got into a fight, but soon after we got back together and I

ended up with his child. We did not stay together and I moved back up north. After four or five years, we got back in touch with each other. In 2001, he called me and told me he had a near death experience and my son and I were the last things he thought of and he wanted to make things right again. We got back together and I did not see the signs, like his breaking items when he got upset, as something that would precede the violence, which was to come. For the next four years he drank and became abusive in speech and actions. Finally, he became drunk and kicked holes in the doors. When I tried to call the police, he pulled the phone out of my hand and pinned me up against the wall. I got free and he took the phone and broke it. The children and I were able to get away. I called someone from the church and was advised to go to the police, He was arrested and the hearing is still pending. I am leaving town to live with relatives and start over.

Storyteller Two

In relationships, I have been a victim of abuse. Throughout my growing up years, I was teased and picked on. Because of this, I believe I started having a low self-esteem of my self. I did not have my first boyfriend until I was seventeen years old. He paid attention to me and flattered me. On the one night, we shared some wine and started making out. Eventually I told him to stop and he would not. He raped me. After that I did not see him anymore except here and there around town.

Shortly after this I moved to California and met Victor. He was another smooth talker. He was a friend of my cousin and he went to church. He was the first boy who wanted to marry me. I thought he was the one. I thought I was in love, anything he wanted I gave him; money, access to my car and apartment, and also my body. When I started running out of money, he found excuses not to spend time with me. He was a big

flirt and it hurt me but I thought once we got married that he would settle down. He moved for a job and wanted to take my car. When I told him no, he said I never really loved him and he was leaving me. After he left, I found out there was someone else he was seeing on the side. This devastated me and I said I would never trust a man again.

Three years later I met Brian. I met him at a bar; so right from the start we had a co-dependant relationship. He was also a pot smoker. At first I told him I would not have sex with him until we dated for six months. He showered me with attention and affection—something that had not happened in a long time. In a matter of weeks, we were sleeping together. He was very jealous and did not like the fact that I had a lot of guy friends. He would yell at me and push me around, but I kept going back because I still wanted to be loved. One day, his ex girlfriend came and he told me he could not stand me and left with her. I did not see him much after that. I was told he was only with me to make her jealous and win her back.

A few months later, I met Brandon at another bar. He was younger than I was and sweet to me. On our first date, he gave me roses and we took a walk as he held my hand. We had long talks and he opened up to me about how he was hurt also in the past. A couple of days later, I was hooked and in bed with him. He was romantic with me, said all the right things and did all the right things. We became engaged three months after we met. He was a Christian and I thought finally the right one. Once I received the ring he thought he owned me. He started making demands. He did not like that I would drink when he was not around. He would always accuse me of cheating. He would stalk me and find me and start yelling and grabbing me to leave wherever I was. He would be at work in the city and find a prostitute, be with her and come home to me. He always told me it was my fault because I was around other guys, He thought he had a right to be with other

girls. I never cheated on him but he always believed I did and used it as an excuse to do what he wanted. He would take my money and keys and be gone for hours but told me not to worry because he would always come home to me because I was his wife. One time we got in an argument outside a friend's house and he threw me down and started to choke me. Two other guys had to pull him off me. He made me believe it was my fault because I knew my drinking had made him mad and I was drunk. We would break up and within a couple of weeks be back together. This lasted for about three years and eventually I moved to get away from it all. Within a few months, we were living together, but it started all over again. He would put me down and tell me I could never leave him or else he would kill me. Nobody would ever want me because I was overweight and a drunk. He would tell me he was the only one for me. By the grace of God, he left with friends of ours to go back to Chicago. I would still see him after this, but it would all start with sex. I realize that I can't be around him at all. When I do I become insecure, depressed and afraid. Every time I would be with him, I would go back to drinking. I broke the soul-ties. I now have boundaries and standards in my life and know I can't let anyone cross the line God set in place for me.

Storyteller Three

I have been a victim of date rape. I was in a dangerous situation hanging with friends and ended up getting drunk. I was not in a right state of mind. A couple of so-called friends tied me in a chair and the brother of one forced himself on me. I felt pain and I still struggle with unforgiveness, but God is now in control.

I had a sibling who was physically abusive. When authority was not around he would say do this or that for me. If I didn't, he would slam me against walls, push me

down stairs, lock me out of the house and try to suffocate me by shoving pillows over my face. This situation I don't hold grudges. I have forgiven and I don't bring it up to the victimizer.

Once I was the victimizer and for about eight months I was verbally, emotionally and physically abusive towards my mother. I put her down when she didn't do the things I wanted her to. I would push her, come up behind her and hit her with things. I would threaten her and just hurt her. It happened to be an anger issue with this one. My father wasn't living at home during this time. This doesn't come up any more; God has healed this situation

I witnessed domestic violence when my parents were arguing, I was trying to mind my own business, and I heard my father say, "go to hell." I ran and saw my mom on the ground because my dad pushed her. My mom got up and took a butcher knife and chased my dad out the door. She ran around the house with the knife and I didn't know what to do. I called the police. They came and I told them everything. My dad was escorted out and had a restraining order against my mom. The result was my parents divorced. Both were mad at me for calling the police. They don't speak to each other anymore, unless it's to argue or if they go to court.

Analysis of Study

Triangulation was employed for variations and comparative analysis. Qualitative research was used for the design and analysis. The three data instruments designed for collection were: the pre and post- training questionnaires, surveys, and the three women interviewed who told their stories.

The pre-training questionnaire and post-training questionnaire were very helpful in showing what the participants of the training session learned. The participants went from little to no knowledge of domestic violence to having a more educated understanding of the process of domestic violence. The training educated and equipped the participants to serve as ministers to victims of domestic violence, which was the outcome. The surveys gave more insight into how widespread abuse is and what means have been used by the women to cope with and end the abuse. Because the nature of the program was that the women are in with a Christian perspective, the suggestions at the end of what to advise someone were definitely different than what the victims themselves did in the abusive relationships. Allowing the women to tell their stories helped to show the different kinds of abuse. Many think that abuse is only physical, yet these women were able to enlighten not only the different kinds of abuse but the impact on their lives and the patterns of behavior, i.e. going from one abusive relationship to another. It was interesting that one of the storytellers actually became a victimizer herself.

The study was more informative than the researcher anticipated. During the eight weeks of training, two of the participants separated from their husbands and both entered counseling. The support for one victim who shared her experience with the training group was more than the researcher expected. It seemed that as soon as the training was set in place, the opportunity presented itself for the demonstration of the equipping of the participants.

What became very interesting during this field experience is that one of the participants of the training session called the researcher late one night to inform her of a domestic violence dispute in the participant's home. The researcher offered lodging and advised a police report. The police were not going to take a report because she only had a

scratch on her chest, until the victim told the police she had an advocate with an agency known as First Step (an agency that helps advocate for victims of domestic violence). The abuser was arrested. The researcher asked the victim what else could be done for her, she replied that she would like for someone to go with her to get a personal protection order (PPO). The researcher agreed to go with her. That Monday, the victim and the researcher went to the city county building in Detroit, Michigan to obtain the personal protection order. This was a five-hour process. There were many people in the waiting area for personal protection orders. You must first sign your name and wait for an advocate to call you. The advocate gives you the forms to fill out. Then you wait for the advocate to call you again. Very little time is spent with the advocate; most of the time is spent waiting. Then you must stand in another line to have the clerk stamp the personal protection order. You are then directed to a courtroom. The victim's protection orders are collected as they stand in another line. It is necessary for them to wait in the courtroom for their name to be called. When their name is called, the personal protection order is returned to the victim signed by the judge. Although we waited in a courtroom, the judge was never present. All of the PPO's were taken back to the judge for signature. After obtaining the PPO, it is at the victim's discretion how the order must be served to the abuser. If the courts serve the order, there is a cost. There are people in the courtroom offering their services for a fee to serve the order or you can have a friend serve the order and sign it, then return it to the court. The pastor was made aware of the situation. He contacted the abuser and spoke with him about being financially responsible for his family. He did drop off some money for the victim with the pastor. However, at this time the victim will probably have to move out of town with relatives, due to the lack of financial support. The case is still pending in court. The victim told the researcher that had she not been going through the training

sessions when the abuse escalated, she probably would not have had the courage to go through the ordeal of reporting and follow-up with the PPO. This, of course, was kept confidential by the researcher. However, the participant shared the information with everyone in the training at the last session. The group was very supportive, the church was allowed to become involved and gave some funding for food and rent.

Summary

The surveys and stories gave the needed insight into domestic violence that is not outside of the church, but inside the church as well. The pre and post training questionnaires showed positive responses from the training sessions. In terms of the analysis of this data, the researcher finds that the model of educating and equipping laity in the church appears to have a positive affect for the victims of domestic violence. This was demonstrated by one of the participants who found herself in a domestic violence dispute. The result was positive for both the victim and those who had been trained to minister to victims. The victim informed the researcher that she did not think she could have followed through with removing herself and her children from the violent home had she not been participating in the training. This researcher concedes that this model of ministry can be modified and used for implementation within other churches for the purpose of training laity to minister to victims of domestic violence.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

As this writer reflects on the beginning of this project, there is awe and wonder at how only God knew where this project was going and how it was going to turn out, for this writer was clueless. When the idea was conceived in the mind of the writer, it started out as a safe house. Because the writer's house had been a safe house for a victim of domestic violence a few months prior to the journey to United Theological Seminary, there is still a strong belief that this writer's safe house was just one of many to come. Yet if we only house victims, change will not come. We must do what is biblically correct. "Open your mouth for the dumb (those unable to speak for themselves) for the rights of all who are left desolate and defenseless; Open your mouth, judge righteously, and administer justice for the poor and needy."¹ This writer has spoken to two people from two different churches about their homes being safe houses for those in need of immediate protection and received positive responses. But the safe houses could not be the beginning; training had to come first. Thus, this project of Training Laity in the Church to Minister to Victims of Domestic Violence was given birth.

One of the areas of reflection that has helped this writer was to see that some of the first attempts could be considered by some to be failures. The first peer group to which this writer was assigned dissolved for lack of members. So the writer found herself moved

¹ Prov. 31:8-9, Amplified Bible

from a group that was focused on Pastoral Counseling and Pastoral Care to a peer group on Urban Development and Intraculture Communication. There is great significance in this move upon reflection because the writer went from a three-person group to a thirteen-person group with a variety of terminal degrees being pursued. The difference in this group was moving from a church group to a community group. This in itself caused tremendous growth for the writer due to the interests and willingness of others to point out blind spots that this writer would not have been aware of without the help of the community of this group. Dr. Robert Walker has truly been the Master Mentor for this writer. Never did Dr. Walker fail to commend and exhort this writer and inspire her to continue and encourage her to capture the vision, write it, and make it plain. An immeasurable amount of energy flowed from this group each time they met. The personalities and the challenges were faced as each member of this peer group exhausted all means to provoke one another on to good works. This writer applauds the spirit of unity found in this peer group as the Word of God proved to be faithful in saying your gifts will make room for you and take you before great men (Ps. 18:16). This writer cannot just reflect on this project without reflecting on the comradeship and all the other projects that went forth as the Lord guided us all on our journey.

The biblical foundation for this project made this writer more aware of the purpose of Kingdom work for which we as the Church have been called out. Jesus clearly defined who our neighbor is and how we should respond to those in need when told to go and do likewise, as the Good Samaritan did. The prayer of this writer is that the religious leaders of today will not simply pass by on the other side of the road where the afflicted and victimized lay. May we not become so caught up in our religious duties that we pass by

those who are close to the heart of God. The history of domestic violence is no less than amazing to this writer. Never has a scripture seemed more appropriate than in Hosea,

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you from being a priest to me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children. (Hos. 4:6).

If we reject the knowledge of our God, we will in fact help to destroy the people. When we do not care for the needs of others, it is not biblical for the Lord to minister to us. It is the theological concept of this project that continues to stretch this writer to grasp more depth of meaning along with implications that can bring about the core conviction that, as a follower of Jesus Christ, we are to still be eyes that seek to save those that are lost, ears that hear the cries of the oppressed and feet that run swiftly to minister the grace of God that has been so freely given unto us. May our experiences and our relationships with God and others, not tradition, inform what we are to be doing. May we not put God in our boxes of circumstances but allow God to be the God of all circumstances.

This writer has been challenged to make this project a community project and not just training for people to add to their list of credentials or accomplishments. This writer discovered that taking ministry to victims of domestic violence from the church to the community is not something that could be taught, but something that was caught. As other members in the church discovered during the training, they found referrals just by word of mouth. Many have come forth and said: "I know someone who is going through this, what can I do to help?" So, the purpose of ministering to those in the community caught by those who heard the training was in process and they themselves gleaned from those who were in the training.

The field experience was educational for this writer. An enormous amount of information concerning this researcher, society, and the church in reference to domestic violence was discovered. As this writer looks back over history, there is awe that there has not been a spiritual uprising for victims of domestic violence. There is much to be said for what the secular world is doing in helping victims of domestic violence, but from the spiritual side we are severely lacking. Slavery was abolished as a result of those who came together to fight a good fight. There were those who banded together until the women got the right to vote. Yet the same women who have been granted the right to vote do not have the protection of their person as every individual created in the image of God should have.

The first attempt to conduct the training sessions was very frustrating, as those who had committed were not able to follow through. Yet, this came to be a very important part of the project. There was a point where the writer thought this was not going to happen, at least not at Praise Chapel. Yet one of the contextual associates, Cindy Goins, was instrumental in giving the writer hope and inspiration. This became an important part of the project because there were now five training sessions to look at and decide what to keep and what to delete and what to add. After a couple of weeks of regrouping and reorganizing, this writer feels that the training sessions were more organized and offered more to the participants who wanted to be a part of the training. This project went in a more positive direction when this writer saw the ones who were serious about committing to the training signing the paperwork to show their commitment.

The training sessions were very intense. There was an urgency to give as much information as possible in the time allotted. Although much was accomplished, there is still much yet to be done. The last training session was very satisfying to see one of the

participants come forth and acknowledge she was a victim in need of ministering. To see the other participants come forth and minister was like putting a puzzle together and seeing the last piece perfectly fit. Sitting in the City County Building for five hours through the procedure of getting a personal protection order was an experience of mixed emotions. To feel the pain and defeat from the victim and the formality and lack of concern from those who are in place to advocate for the victim was very frustrating. This writer has kept in touch with the participant who has since moved to another city with relatives, unable to take care of herself and children without the income from her husband. After leaving the state, this woman found herself to be pregnant with another child and feels overwhelmed with having to do so much as a single mom. There are plans being made to have her return, which is what she desires to do so that she can have the support she needs from the community of believers. The sad part about all this is that the way the legal system is set up the victim is the one who is forced to flee from the man. Violence has become so common in domestic disputes in our society that abusers are allowed to continue with their lives even though everyone else in the family has had their lives totally disrupted.

Most of the participants said they wanted more. As the season and times allow, this writer plans to bring more. It was impressive to see and be a part of the participants' eagerness to learn. There was a willingness to open up, be vulnerable and admit the things they did not know. Since this training, this writer has been able to bring forth the ministry at Praise Chapel for victims of domestic violence. One of the participants who was trained has now been joined with a lady from another church who is a victim of domestic violence. This victim is too embarrassed for anyone in her own church to know what her husband's actions are because they have both been members of their church for a long time. These

are new beginnings for Praise Chapel. Praise Chapel has been like most churches, without ministry for victims of domestic violence. Thank God there are now people trained who are able to do more than shake their head and talk about the situation.

The storytelling was a very moving experience. Domestic violence became such a broad context for those who have lived it in so many different ways. With all the experience of this writer, there still erupted such a deep compassion for those who have been so deeply, yet carelessly hurt. One can have an understanding of the dynamics, yet it does not in any way prepare for the anguish and pain of the afflicted.

There was a surprise in the surveys to find nine out of ten women victims of domestic violence in one place. There was a correlation of drugs and alcohol abuse in this program, yet there was still not an expectation to find the statistics so high. The surveys were an added dimension of the project. They also served to motivate the writer to continue with the project.

What this writer feels is lacking at this point is to test the model for effectiveness, which time has not allowed at this point. It would have been interesting to have held the training in other churches simultaneously and followed up for a time afterward. In a sense, the model has been tested with the participant being ministered to after revealing that she herself was a victim of domestic violence. Following up on the training has not had time to occur. This writer also acknowledges the need for more training, not only in the church, but also where she is employed to minister to women in their woundedness. Much of this woundedness is a result of being a victim of abuse. If the calls that have started coming in are any indication of what is yet to come, we will be blessed at Praise Chapel to begin a great work that the Lord has set before us.

One of the things this writer would have liked to implement in this study is a need assessment from various churches that do minister to victims of domestic violence in any way. Although part of the training required the participants to acquire their own resource manual, this was mostly from secular organizations. This writer feels that there was a lack of spiritual input from this data. Most secular programs systematically take the victim through the system without any regard for their personhood and dignity. For the future, this writer would like to take those who have completed the training and anyone else who is interested to visit shelters and agencies that serve victims of domestic violence for the purpose of education and experience. This writer also would have wanted to make more churches aware of the training that was being offered at Praise Chapel so that more could have become involved.

This was a time for this writer to actualize what had been accomplished in this terminal degree. Never before has it been so apparent to this writer what a difference education has made in the work that is being accomplished. There was a time of grappling with concepts that were foreign to those around this writer as she conveyed purpose and direction for the project. There is now a realization of how much growth has been accomplished in this work as a result of the intensive study that was not present before pursuing this terminal degree. What has been learned is that a person ministering in a marginalized setting must meet the expectations of the people and also adjust for meaning to reach a state of mutual understanding. What is so very much appreciated by this writer is the liberty that Bishop Schubert has given to test new ideas and concepts and be the person that God has called this writer to be. Bishop Schubert has not only allowed, but also encouraged new ministries and change for the better.

In summary, it is this writer's belief that this ministry model of excellence has educated and equipped the participants to minister to victims of domestic violence. It is also this researcher's belief that this ministry model of excellence can be duplicated in other churches and be just as effective to train and equip others to minister to victims of domestic violence.

The thought that this writer would like to leave with the reader is that obedience is better than sacrifice, yet obedience and sacrifice go hand in hand. Many times as ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we are willing to sacrifice our time, our finances, our families, our relationships, and our good sense to the Church. We are not as obedient to do what God has called us to do for the Church, which is for each other.

Know this, my beloved brethren. Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted work, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving yourselves . . ." (Jas. 1:19-22).

We talk about saving souls, yet the Church must help others put away some things such as anger which does not work the righteousness of God in order for souls to be saved. Yes, it is an individual responsibility, and yes, we are our brother's keeper. James goes on to say

My brethren, if any one among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins." (James 5:19-20)

We are called to minister to victims and administer justice for the victims in order to fulfill the great commandment that was given by Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

In conclusion, this writer would like to say that never before in her experience has the grace of God been so present in undertaking a project. There has been an assurance from the Spirit of the Lord that this project is just one of many instruments used in the

Kingdom of God to work out for humanity the will of God. Although there was preparation for the journey, the walk of faith was only completed by the trust and confidence in the Lord. Endless opportunities were given to rise to the occasion and without fail see the hand of God move. The journey continues with a Word from the Lord:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion-to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified, They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations . . . For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them . . . (Is. 61:1-8)

APPENDIX A
LETTER OF INVITATION FOR THE TRAINING



34645 Cowan Road
Westland, MI 48185

Ron Schubert
Senior Pastor

December 20, 2004

Dear Sisters in the Lord;

You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted, you encourage them,
and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed,
in order that man who is of earth, may terrify no more
(Psalm. 10:17-18 NIV)

Seeking: Women with an interest in learning to minister to victims of
domestic violence.

Trainer: Sheila Brown, who is developing a program to train laity to
minister to victims of domestic violence.

Requirements:

- 8 weekly sessions with a faithful, regular commitment.
- Beginning Thursday January 6, 2005 6:30-8:30 p.m.

You are invited to be involved in this training, in order that you may
be more greatly used by the Lord to minister to others who are affected
by Domestic Violence.

Please consider being a significant part of Sheila Brown's Doctoral
degree process by participating in her training regarding domestic
violence.

This commitment does require faithful, weekly attendance in order for
Sheila to collect data for her dissertation.

You will receive the benefit by learning how to be more aware of
Domestic Violence and a more effective and empathetic listener to
others involved in Domestic Violence.

Please pray about your involvement in this study. Detach and return
the bottom portion of this letter in the offering plate at Praise Chapel
by Sunday, January 2, 2005.

Name _____

Phone Number _____

Phone: 734-513-5174

Fax: 734-838-9962
www.praise-chapel.org

Our Mission is His Message

APPENDIX B
PRE AND POST TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE

Assessment for Domestic Violence Pre-Training Questionnaire

My Doctorate of Ministry project focuses on the impact of your experience during Domestic Violence Training. Your responses will help to determine what components of the training and curriculum are necessary to promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. In order to facilitate this I need to collect data from you concerning your experiences and knowledge in domestic violence. Your participation in the questionnaire is voluntary but greatly needed. All responses will be kept confidential. Your responses and suggestions will ultimately be used to help improve the Domestic Violence Training for future participants. Thank you for your participation in this project.

How old are you? ___18-25 ___26-30 ___31-35 ___36-40 ___41-45 ___46-50 ___51 and older

What is your race? ___African American ___Caucasian ___Hispanic ___Other (please fill in)_____

1. Define domestic violence.
2. What is your current knowledge of domestic violence?
3. Why do you think domestic violence occurs?
4. What measures can be taken to prevent domestic violence, if any?
5. How might you know if a person is a victim of domestic violence?
6. Do you think a person should remain in a relationship if he/she is being abused? Why or why not?
7. What does Scripture have to say about domestic violence?
8. What do you think the church's response should be to domestic violence?
9. List three things you would like to learn about domestic violence.

Assessment for Domestic Violence Post-Training Questionnaire

My Doctorate of Ministry project focuses on the impact of your experience during Domestic Violence Training. Your responses will help to determine what components of the training and curriculum are necessary to promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. In order to facilitate this I need to collect data from you concerning your experiences and knowledge in domestic violence. Your participation in the questionnaire is voluntary but greatly needed. All responses will be kept confidential. Your responses and suggestions will ultimately be used to help improve the Domestic Violence Training for future participants. Thank you for your participation in this project.

1. Define domestic violence.
2. What is your current knowledge of domestic violence?
3. Why do you think domestic violence occurs?
4. What measures can be taken to prevent domestic violence? If any?
5. How might you know if a person is a victim of domestic violence?
6. Do you think a victim should stay in a relationship if he/she is being abused? Why or why not?
7. What does Scripture have to say about domestic violence?
8. What do you think the church's response should be to domestic violence?
9. List three things you learned from this training.
10. Recommend two things that would improve this training.

APPENDIX C
SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Survey Questions for Domestic Violence

My Doctorate of Ministry project focuses on the impact of your experience in domestic violence. Your responses will help promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this survey is voluntary but greatly needed. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation in this project.

You may use the back of this paper for more space.

1. Have you been involved in a relationship that involved domestic violence?

Yes _____ No _____

2. How many? _____

3. How long did the relationship(s) last?

4. What help, if any, did you seek while you were in this relationship?

5. From whom, if anyone, did you seek help?

6. Were you involved with any religious groups?

7. What was the outcome of the relationship?

8. To whom would you refer someone who is in an abusive relationship?

APPENDIX D
THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TRAINING MANUAL

Domestic Violence Training Manual

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DEDICATION

I write this to my daughters and grandchildren in order to leave a legacy of my life experiences and the challenges that have impacted my life. My parents, children, sister, brother, and grandchildren are such an important part of my history of old stories and new beginnings. I am thankful that, regardless of what happens, Jesus Christ is Lord of my life. Our past is shaping our future. Our roads have been those less traveled by many; yet the accomplishments have been great. Many people have greatly influenced my life, yet it has been the love I have for my family that has given me the courage to continue striving to overcome the obstacles that life has set before me. May the love of God be the wind that pushes us to finish the race that is set before us. Find relationships that are fulfilling. Learn to look far beneath the surface. Never let what is overwhelming one day prevent you from facing life's challenge the next. Accept our callings and be assured that He who has called us is Faithful.

WE ARE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST

You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more. (Psalm 10:17-18 NIV)

A very effective way of fulfilling this verse is to put on the mind of Christ, hear the desire of the afflicted, encourage them of their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ and offer them the Lord's house as a place of refuge where there is peace and not terror.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence has been a part of this writer's journey as far off as she can remember. As a young child, this writer found herself terrified in the midst of domestic disputes. This writer remembers trying extremely hard not to bring attention to herself to prevent being the cause of anything that might have a violent outcome. In this writer's extended family of relatives, there was violence in domestic relationships as well as in the community. Violence has been so much a part of the American way of life. This writer really did not give it much thought until it was close to home and she determined to keep it as far from the writer's personal life as possible.

This writer did not think she would be the one to address what should be the churches' response to domestic violence. This did not become a passion for the writer until the Lord inspired the desire. In retrospect, this writer is amazed as to how the Lord prepared her for this journey. Before this, there was never any consideration for her involvement in the church one way or another; there was no reason to consider areas where there was not involvement. Yet, when this writer began to critically review interest in social justice and the roots in history that have endeavored to pluck up the bands of oppression, she found the God of justice. The God of justice was found in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament. In the Hebrew Bible, one can read in Zech. 7: 9-10:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy each to his brother, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor and let none of you devise evil against his brother in your heart.

The spirit of Deuteronomy agrees with Zechariah on being merciful and gracious toward the downtrodden: “He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.” (Deut 10:18)¹

Justice is also found in the New Testament. In the song of Mary, one can see the Messiah as a worker of justice:

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, he has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.” (Luke 1:46-53)²

Dr. Andrew Park made an interesting comment pertaining to this scripture “In the Messiah’s presence, the lowly and the poor would be lifted up, while the rich and the powerful would undergo a fall. These passages indicate that it is not religious, but rather social and political changes that set the agenda for the messianic tasks. In line with the spirit of the Hebrew Bible, he cared for the well being of the poor, the sick, the widows, and the aliens. Jesus’ mission focused on justice for the oppressed, not the justification of the oppressor.”³ In our churches many have found that we are always ready to tell those who have sinned that there is a Savior to forgive their sins and rightly so, yet we sometimes neglect to reach out to those who have been wounded by the sinner, and tell

¹ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973). All Scripture citations are taken from this version unless otherwise noted.

² Ibid.

³ Andrew Sung Park, *From Hurt to Healing, A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004).

them that there is a Healer and a Deliverer, the Messiah, Who came to set the captives free.

This justice is for the wounded. The church has not always taken a stand on injustice for victims of domestic violence. This training model is not so much about justice, as it is about ministering to those who have suffered injustice. In order to bring this point of view into focus, one must first look at domestic violence as a form of injustice and, as a result, there is a need to minister to those who are oppressed because of this injustice in their lives. This program will help the church train its people to minister to victims of domestic violence.

CONTENT FOR THE TRAINING SESSIONS

Session One

- Devotions with Scripture and Prayer
- Assessment for Domestic Violence Pre-Training Questionnaire
- Show Video “Silent Suffering Silent Shame”
- Defining Domestic Violence
- The Four Agreements
- Questions and Comments
- Close in Prayer

Session Two

- Devotions with Scripture and Prayer
- Domestic Violence Confidentiality and Privacy Contract
- Breaking the Silence/ Power of Naming
- Meeting the Person in Their Aloneness
- Responses to Situations - Listening Skills
- Questions and Comments
- Close in Prayer

Session Three

- Devotions with Scripture and Prayer
- Power and Control Wheel
- Different Types of Abuse
- The Victimization Process
- Soul Ties and Toxic Shame
- Discussion on Soul Ties
- Discussion on Toxic Shame
- Questions and Comments
- Close in Prayer

Session Four

Devotions with Scripture and Prayer

Scripture Leviticus 26:6-13

What needs are to be met?

Offering Hope With God

Questions and Comments

Close in Prayer

Session Five

Devotions with Scripture and Prayer

Accepting Decisions Without Judging

How did Jesus Respond to People

Factors in the Effectiveness of Jesus' Ministry

Establishing a Biblical Counseling Process

Questions and Comments

Close in Prayer

Session Six

Devotions with Scripture and Prayer

Looking at Our Own Bias

What Is Transference?

Resources—How To Find Them

Comments and Questions

Close in Prayer

Session Seven

Open with Scripture and Prayer

What is the Church's Responsibility

What Scriptures are Misused

Scriptures That Are Appropriate

Share Resources

Questions and Comments

Close in Prayer

Session Eight

Open with Scripture and Prayer

Finding A Way To Forgive

Role Plays

Assessment for Domestic Violence Post-Training Questionnaire

Survey Questions for Domestic Violence

Storytelling

Questions and Comments

Close in Prayer

Session One

I. Devotions

II. Assessment for Domestic Violence Pre-Training Questionnaire

Your responses will help to determine what components of the training and curriculum are necessary to promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. In order to facilitate this, we need to collect data from you concerning your experiences and knowledge in domestic violence. Your participation in the questionnaire is voluntary but greatly needed. All responses will be kept confidential. Your responses and suggestions will ultimately be used to help improve the Domestic Violence Training for future participants. Thank you for your participation in this project.

How old are you? ___ 18-25 ___ 26-30 ___ 31-35 ___ 36-40 ___ 41-45 ___ 46-50 ___ 51-older

What is your race? ___ African American ___ Caucasian ___ Hispanic ___ Other-specify

1. Define domestic violence.
2. What is your current knowledge of domestic violence?
3. Why do you think domestic violence occurs?
4. What measures can be taken to prevent domestic violence, if any?
5. How might you know if a person is a victim of domestic violence?
6. Do you think a person should remain in a relationship if he/she is being abused? Why or why not?
7. What does Scripture have to say about domestic violence?
8. What do you think the church's response should be to domestic violence?
9. List three things you would like to learn about domestic violence.

III. SHOW VIDEO, “SILENT SUFFERING, SILENT SHAME”⁴

IV. DEFINING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence by barest definition is violence within a home. For broader definitions there are usually two components. One, domestic usually involves “family relationship, explicit and formal or informal, usually between adults of similar age, else it is labeled child abuse or child molestation for children, and elder abuse for older adults. Two, romantic relationships including marriages, cohabitation, and dating relationships, sexual and nonsexual, exclusive or nonexclusive, heterosexual or homosexual.

Violence can include but is not limited to physical violence, ranging from rape to murder to unwanted physical contact. There is also indirect physical violence, throwing objects near the victim, destroying objects, and harming animals.

Violence can be mental or emotional. This can include verbal threats of physical violence to the victim, the self, or others including children, insults, put-downs, and attacks. The threats can also be nonverbal i.e. facial expressions, gestures, and body postures. Violence can also include economic and social abuse. This is controlling the victim’s money and other economic resources, preventing victims from seeing relatives and friends and isolating victim from any social contacts.⁵

⁴ Department of Women’s Ministries, Church of God International Offices

⁵ *Wikipedia* Encyclopedia

V. THE FOUR AGREEMENTS

1. BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD

Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love

2. DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY

Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.

3. DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.

4. ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST

Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret.

Author unknown

Session Two

I. Devotions

II.

Domestic Violence

Confidentiality and Privacy Contract

(Church or organization)

I fully understand, as a participant in _____ Domestic Violence Training, the importance and legal ramifications of holding the strictest confidentiality whether through scheduled meetings, personal conversation, and individual prayer.

Any information obtained on behalf of a Domestic Violence case should be sealed and properly filed in a locked location to maintain privacy for each individual.

Failure to maintain the above guidelines will result in being removed from participating in _____ and can result in legal issues for myself and or _____.

Please fill out the following information:

Name: _____

Address _____

City, State _____

& Zip Code _____

Date _____

Ministry Leader _____

III. BREAKING THE SILENCE/ POWER OF NAMING⁶

NAMING

In order to be of assistance, either to a woman being abused by her partner, or to the man who is hurting her, ministers needed to state clearly that they are aware that abuse is occurring. Ministers may think that they have indicated a willingness to help those who are abused or abusers, but often such hints of concern are so veiled that they are not experienced as signs of help. Likewise, the victim or the perpetrator may think that the abuse has been disclosed, but because it may have been done in such an indirect way, or so timidly, the minister did not hear it as a disclosure about violence. Ministers may think that they did their best to reach out, while the victims and perpetrators may think that when they told, the minister was unresponsive.

One can imagine many instances when shouting for help would be appropriate, for instance, when mugged on the street. But when is the appropriate time for the woman who is being battered to shout for help? After all, a stranger does not threaten her; the man she loves does. He is not violent all the time; the memory of special moments—and his own current behavior, which at times may be less threatening—work to distort her sense of danger. He is threatening, but he has promised to stop; he is violent, but he needs her so badly. Moreover, the man she loves has slowly reconstructed her world, depriving her of outside contacts, perhaps destroying symbols of those contacts (like photographs), monitoring her movements and telephone conversations. At which moment in this insidiously shrinking circle of opportunities will she speak the unspeakable?

THE POWER OF NAMING

The power of naming is the power of self-authorization. Ministers must offer both victims and abusers this power because each may minimize the violence, reinterpret what occurred, and excuse the battering behavior. She must name her world—including his battering behavior—so that she can be safe; he must name his world—including his battering behavior—as the first step in stopping it. Silence protects the status quo, and the status quo favors men who batter.

⁶ Carol A. Adams, *Woman Battering* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 28-31.

The care provider must create the climate for moving from silence to naming the violence, thus offering an invitation to healing and liberation. When ministers name by speaking about battering and abusive behavior within a church context, they offer an invitation in two important ways. First, denial of responsibility for the violence and terror of abusive behavior is a common character trait of the abuser. The abuser must be encouraged to name his abusive behavior. Unless he does that he will not avail himself of help, for he believes he does not have a problem; she does. Second, denial of the seriousness or the meaning of the violence and the terror is a survival mechanism for the victim. In fact, she may not have a name for what she is experiencing. To offer the name then is to offer the possibility of change.

WHY NAMING DOES NOT OCCUR

Many reasons can be offered to explain why naming does not occur. Shame is associated with woman battering—for victim and abuser. Secrets are hard to give up. Telling is hard. Thus the minister often needs to explore these reasons with the congregation in various settings in order to encourage the naming process.

Typical Inhibitors for Battered Women

In cases of woman battering, telling is suffused with feelings of stigma, fear, defilement, guilt, and denial. Disclosing abuse is scary. It's embarrassing. She feels responsible and may fear being prejudged. Naming may not occur because she is suffering from the shock and stress of ongoing traumatization. Humiliated by the abuse and ashamed of her powerlessness in stopping it, her shameful feelings multiply when she becomes further ashamed of her silence. Seeing herself as being dishonest, she may become more isolated and withdrawn or so embarrassed that she does not tell anyone what has happened.

Telling on someone who has power over her increases the fear that people will not believe her or understand her. She may see herself as disloyal if she tells. She may fear reprisal, that she will be punished for telling, or that he will hurt or take the kids. She may wish to spare him embarrassment. She may fear repercussions from authorities:

deportation or the removal of her children. She may remind herself that she was brought up not to tell on family. She may feel sorry for the man who harms her. She may believe that she should turn the other cheek.

The victim may fear not only the reaction of the abuser but also the reaction of the care provider: disbelief, judgment, ostracism, or worse, and inadequate or insensitive response such as believing that she likes the abuse. Her batterer has probably threatened “No one will ever believe you if you tell on me.” She may fear that her counselor cannot make sense of what she discloses and instead will be stunned by her shocking information. She may have assessed her minister, sensing an inability to hear the information. After experiencing constant criticism by her partner, turning to someone else for help means opening herself up to others’ criticisms. She may fear that others will confirm her own harsh self-judgment.

The woman may have been raped by her husband but does not name her experience of forced sex as rape. Not having a name to give this experience means that she cannot talk about it with anybody.

The gender of the minister may be a barrier to telling. A woman may not feel safe telling a man. Many women who suffer violence may fear that clergymen will identify with their partner, not with them, and dismiss the seriousness of his behavior through identification with his good characteristics—that he is wonderful, he had done so much good, and so forth, that this behavior was an aberration, not a practice, not an ongoing problem. Many marital rape victims experience the long-term effect of not being able to trust men. What they need is the opportunity of talking with their peers—or the women victimized by assaultive partners.

The victim may not tell because she sees the minister as naïve and able to be manipulated by the batterer. Concerned that the man who hurts her will use counseling as a form of control, she sees no point in bringing in a care provider who she thinks would allow rather than stop the manipulation, thus sanctioning the abuse.

She may not name the violence because she denies that battering is occurring. She uses make-up and sunglasses to hide bruises and wounds. She appears at an emergency room saying she fell down the stairs. She may admit that she is being battered, but she denies that battering is a problem. Facing the reality of her situation may be too

frightening. It is especially difficult for a wife to admit that her husband raped her because that would mean that she is living with a rapist and that she is always vulnerable to rape.

In naming the controlling behavior that she has suffered, she faces the burden of reporting the negative naming that she may have experienced. As a part of his psychological battering of her, her partner may have called her cunt, bitch, stupid, slave, dummy, and whore. If she is a woman of color, this demeaning language may be racialized as well. These words, an influential part of her abuse, may be too painful to repeat and may communicate multiple oppression too overwhelming to confront.

Naming the abuse may not occur because she does not know anything is wrong. She may believe that violence is normal. She may not know that it is against the law to rape or batter women. Naming may not occur because, although she knows that something is wrong, when she told someone, the person never responded. Or, knowing something terrible is wrong, she told and the controlling man retaliated. She may think that everyone, including the minister, knows, but nobody, including the minister, cares.

She may not name the violence because she, like the man who batters, minimizes what he is doing. She minimizes his behavior because she fears and loves him. She may rationalize the violence by explaining to herself that her partner is not responsible because he is sick, alcoholic, unemployed, a veteran, a victim himself, or under stress—focusing on his characteristics rather than his behavior.

She may believe that she acted provocatively or that she has been unchristian and this results in her battering. Or, she may believe she controls the violence by accommodating her husband's various demands. She may fear that telling will mean that she has to leave and she may not be ready to make this decision.

Naming may be occurring without explicit naming. In physical symptoms that she identifies, in emotional issues that she brings to a minister such as depression and anxiety, in theological issues that her concern, such as a loss of faith, a feeling of God's abandonment, being in a spiritual war, or anger at God—in all these ways she may be saying that she is suffering abuse.⁷

⁷ Carol A. Adams, *Woman Battering* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 28-31.

IV. MEETING THE PERSON IN THEIR ALONENESS⁸

What Aloneness Is to Be Removed?

Just as people have been trained extensively in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) to ask questions to discern quickly what they need to do, we have defined questions that can help you assess a course of action when coming alongside people hurting in a different way. The first question is “What aloneness is to be removed?” We need to be trained to look for aloneness in people—to begin to entertain the thought that many people who are hurting are hurting alone. When God said in Genesis 2:18 that it is not good for man to be alone, He was revealing a fundamental aspect of human beings—they are created for meaningful relationship with God and with others. Therefore, if isolated or disconnected from those who love and care for us, we have a dilemma. Notice that the first act of ministry by the Good Samaritan was that, rather than seeing the man on the side of the road and passing by, he crossed the road, removing the aloneness of the one lying there half dead. Don’t miss the powerful simplicity in his simply crossing the road and being with the one lying beside the road.

Irrelevant Questions for People in Need

In the story of the Good Samaritan, imagine the priest and Levite walking down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, coming upon the wounded man lying on the other side. What do you think they might have said or done? The Bible doesn’t say, other than that they passed by. Could it be that they prayed for the man as they passed by? Might they have called out a Scriptural truth or offered spiritual pep talks as they passed by? For example, considering that this road may have wound through the very area referred to in Psalm 23 as the Valley of the Shadow of Death, they might have said, “Do not be afraid, the lord is with you!” There’s certainly benefit in prayer and truth, but unless we first minister to the aloneness, the prayers and Scriptures we quote may have little impact. The first thing the Samaritan did was to move across the road to minister to the aloneness that was there. That’s the power of what God had done through relationships, for it is relationships that

⁸ David Ferguson and Bruce Walker, *Relational First Aid* (Austin: Intimacy Press, 2001) 9-13

God has created to remove aloneness. He created marriages, families, and fellowship (*koinonia*) within the Body of Believers, the Church, to further remove our aloneness on Earth.

Learning to Look for Aloneness

Recalling an old cliché⁹ can help you becoming more equipped to look for aloneness in the people around—STOP, LOOK, and LISTEN.

1. STOP and notice people (see Mark 5—Jesus stops when touched)

It may be people closest to you—roommates, family members spouses, work associates, fellow Bible study participants. Stop and notice. Much about learning to care effectively for others is leaning to give close attention and that is difficult to do if you are too busy with activities, tasks, or other things. Expect “divine encounters.”

2. LOOK for the pain of aloneness. (see John 5—Man beside the pool)

Notice the symptoms or manifestations of aloneness in their context. People face losses trauma, broken relationships, or failures, but often face them alone. When pain is dealt with alone, it may be manifested in symptoms such as withdrawal, anger, control, manipulation, procrastination, physical disorders, etc. look for the pain of aloneness that may be made evident in symptoms.

3. LISTEN for words of aloneness, (John 4—Woman at the well)

Listen to pain beneath the surface. Sometimes aloneness is revealed by incessant words or quick spiritual platitudes that seek to disguise the lonely, disconnected heart underneath. At times, the words are cries for help, such as, “I don’t know if I can go on.” Jesus spoke to the lack of lasting relationships in the woman’s life—with Him and her husbands.⁹

¹⁵ Ibid., 9-10.

V. RESPONSES TO SITUATIONS – LISTENING SKILLS¹⁰

Emotional Responding. Often, when we have been hurt, disappointed, discouraged or ashamed, well-intended people have responded with advice, with criticism, with rebuke, with silence, or with a “fix.” None of these responses heal hurt or free us from pain.

Emotional pain requires an emotional response. Here are some contrasting examples:

NOT GOOD RESPONSES TO PAIN

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Facts, Logic, or Reason | What you need to do is... Well, if you had only... That happened to you because... |
| Criticism | You’ll never graduate now! How stupid! You know better. I can’t believe you did that. |
| Complaint, One-Upping | You should hear what happened to me. Think how that made me look. It was much worse when my John died. |
| Neglect, Indifference | I’m busy now. Tell me later. You’ll get over it. Happens to everyone. “ (Silence, no response at all) |

¹⁰ Ibid., 61.

GOOD RESPONSES TO EMOTIONAL PAIN:

"Mary, I can see that you are hurting. I want you to know I care."

"That's a huge loss, Mark. I'm sad, knowing you are going through it."

"I can imagine that you feel bad about what you did. I hurt for you."

Think of responses for the following situations and discuss them.

A woman whose husband just left her: _____

A couple whose infant just dies of SIDS _____

A man whose drinking just cost him his job _____

A teenager rejected for a prom date _____

A man whose wife has Alzheimer's _____

A woman diagnosed with cancer _____

A couple unable to have children _____

A teenager who has no friends _____

A pastor let go by his first church _____

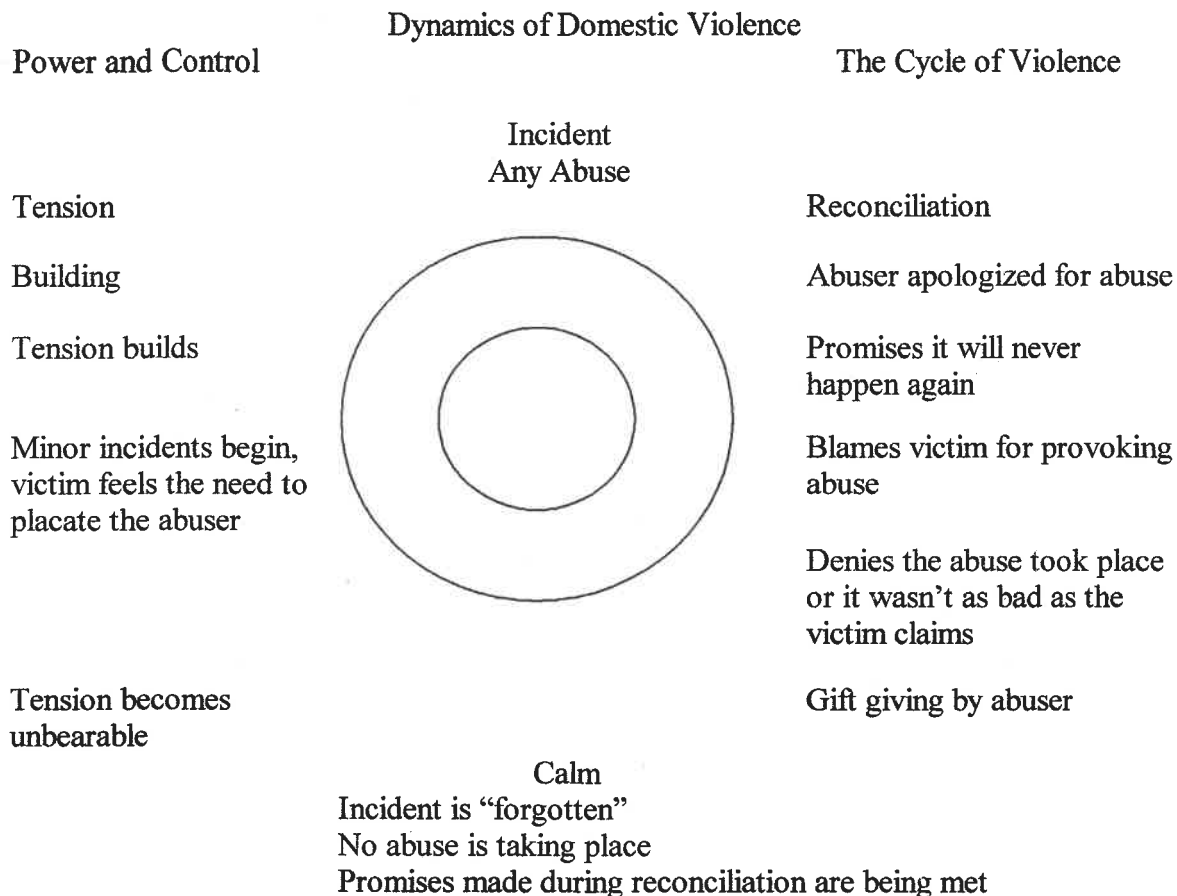
A depressed person who feels worthless:¹¹

¹¹ David Ferguson and Bruce Walker, *Relational First Aid* (Austin: Intimate Press), 61.

Session Three

I. Devotions

II. POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL¹²



This cycle can happen hundreds of times in an abusive relationship. Each stage lasts a different amount of time in a relationship, with the total cycle taking from a few hours to a year or more to complete.

The first cycle is one of tension building. Whenever minor incidents happen, the victim tries to smooth things over until the tension becomes unbearable. Then, no matter how hard the victim tries, the abuse happens. After the abuse, there is reconciliation. The abuser apologizes, promises it will never happen again, minimizes the abuse, claims the victim causes it and will give gifts. There will be a time where no abuse is taking place, then, the cycle starts all over again.

¹² John K. Vining, *When Home is Where the Hurt Is* (Cleveland: Pathway Press, 1997), 75.

III. DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABUSE

USING COERCION AND THREATS Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her, threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare, making her drop charges, making her do illegal things.

USING INTIMIDATION. Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures, smashing things, destroying her property, abusing pets, displaying weapons.

USING EMOTIONAL ABUSE. Putting her down, making her feel bad about herself, calling her names, making her think she's crazy, playing mind games, humiliating her, making her feel guilty.

USING ISOLATION. Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes, limiting her outside involvement, using jealousy to justify actions.

MINIMIZING, DENYING, AND BLAMING. Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously, saying the abuse didn't happen, shifting responsibility for abusive behavior, saying she caused it.

USING CHILDREN. Making her feel guilty about the children, using the children to relay messages, using visitation to harass her, threatening to take the children away.

USING MALE PRIVILEGE. Treating her like a servant, making all the big decisions, acting like the "master of the castle" being the one to define men and women's roles.

USING ECONOMIC ABUSE. Preventing her from getting or keeping a job, making her ask for money, giving her an allowance, taking her money, not letting her know ¹³

¹³ Ibid.

IV. THE VICTIMIZATION PROCESS¹⁴

What happens to you after experiencing repeated abuse?

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Phase 1 | <p>First incidents of Violence</p> <p>You experience disbelief, denial</p> <p>You feel responsible</p> <p>You feel shame and embarrassment</p> <p>You try to become a better partner</p> <p>You believe that if you change your behavior, the violence will stop, i.e. YOU CAN RESPOND; you talk to your family; you may call the police, you seek medical attention.</p> |
| Phase 2 | <p>More Incidents of Violence:</p> <p>You become more afraid for you own and your children's safety.</p> <p>You may deny the seriousness of the attacks.</p> <p>You make excuses for the batterer.</p> <p>You begin to turn to others for help</p> <p>i.e., YOU FEEL YOU HAVE LIMITED OPTIONS; you keep the "secret" fear escalates you may prevent follow-through with the legal system</p> |
| Phase 3 | <p>Years of Abuse and Life-Threatening Situations;</p> <p>You feel hopeless, worthless, and depressed.</p> <p>Without showing emotion, you tell stories of abuse which outrage the listener.</p> <p>You have suicidal thoughts.</p> <p>You may be hospitalized; you feel (or may act) crazy.</p> <p>i.e., YOU FEEL YOU HAVE FEW OPTIONS; you do whatever you think is necessary to be safe; fear is your motivator.</p> |

¹⁴ JAB/FS The Victimization Process, (author unknown) (visual of cycle)

V. SOUL TIES AND TOXIC SHAME

Genesis 2:24 “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”

Soul = “The essence of being or life; the animating principle, ultimately derived from God, who “breathed” into mankind...thereby creating a living soul.”¹⁵

Discussion on Soul Ties

Neil T. Anderson talks about soul ties, how when we have sexual union with a person our souls are tied. This can be seen in a person in the cycle of domestic violence. This is also one of the reasons it is so hard for a person that is being victimized to break the cycle of domestic violence. Once they have come together as one, their souls are tied and emotionally there is a great void and ache for that person even if the victim has just been abused.¹⁶

Toxic Shame

John Bradshaw discusses toxic shame as being defined as “something is wrong with me” as opposed to healthy shame, which says “something is wrong with my behavior.”

¹⁵ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991).

¹⁶ Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1993).

Session Four

I. Devotions

II. Lev. 26:6-13.

And I will give you peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will remove evil beasts from the land, and the sword shall not go through your land and you shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword; And I will have regard for you and make you fruitful and multiply you and will confirm my covenant with you. And you shall eat old store long kept, and you shall clear out the old to make way for the new. And I will make my abode among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God and you shall be my people. I am the Lord your God, who brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that you should not be their slaves; and I have broken the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.

III. What Needs Are To Be Met?¹⁷

Phil. 4:19 says my God shall supply all your needs...

This verse does not make sense unless we as humans have needs.

Eph. 4:29 "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear."

Spiritual Needs. We need freedom from our sin, peace, salvation etc.

Physical Needs. These are obvious to us—air, water, food, rest, etc

Emotional/Relational Needs. Just as real as physical needs, but not as apparent, these are needs of the soul that can only be met through relationships—with God and with meaningful others in our lives. These needs are:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| -ACCEPTANCE | -COMFORT |
| -AFFECTION | -ENCOURAGEMENT |
| -APPRECIATION | -RESPECT |
| -APPROVAL | -SECURITY |
| -ATTENTION | -SUPPORT |

¹⁷ David Ferguson and Bruce Walker, *Relational First Aid* (Austin: Intimacy Press, 2001), 23-27.

Three important needs to address are:

1. **SUPPORT.** People need support at the point of their struggles. When you see people struggling, going down for the last time, they need what we call support. They need someone to bear their burden with them, as Gal. 6:2 (NKJV) says, “fulfilling the Law of Christ.” Offer support when you see people struggling. Support has to do with getting under the load with someone and bearing the burden together. It’s one of the most practical of needs and needs practical help—taking food, giving rides, helping cope.

2. **ENCOURAGEMENT.** People need encouragement at their point of weariness. Discipline yourself to look for people who are growing weary. You can even grow weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9), and people involved in ministry are quite vulnerable to this. It can be as simple as helping people recognize some small victories, or urging them forward toward hope. It can be affirming them in their efforts and nudging them to take the next step. Sometimes, the ministry of encouragement looks like coming alongside and helping people identify some very practical things to do to progress toward a goal of theirs. Learn to recognize people who are weary and give them encouragement.

3. **ACCEPTANCE.** Another need that we are likely to encounter as we find people along the road is acceptance. We need to learn to accept people at the point of failure. We are looking for people who are, at times, struggling or weary. We also need to be looking for people who have failed. They may have failed in the brokenness of their own sin. They may have failed in arenas of achievement or accomplishment. They may have failed in their own eyes or in the eyes of others. Rather the failures are real or imagined; it is painful and real to them. When people are failing, God's love can flow through us to touch them at the point of their need for acceptance.

IV. OFFERING HOPE WITH GOD

LIVING INTO A PROCESS OF HOPE¹⁸

1. Hope is alive beyond the brokenness of abuse because it is centered in a relationship with God.
2. To have hope is to live in a hopeful process.
3. Hope does not deny pain.
4. Speaking the truth is initiating the process of hope.
5. Hope is expressed in clarity and power when the hidden act of domestic violence is revealed.
6. Hope is possible because God listens to the cry for help.
7. Hope grasps the courage to face the unknown.
8. The journey to covenant with God embodies great hope.
9. Hope is enlarged through broadening the structure of support to the abused; support to hear, to help intervene to be with, to construct and act on a plan for the process of healing.
10. The process of hope fuses together once again the frayed fibers of mutual respect.
11. Hope is not an option.
12. Hope enacts viable belief.
13. Hope is not static in the face of abuse.
14. Hope is challenging.
15. Hope that is lived affirms the innate human right to safety and self-worth.
16. Hope comes through being informed about the patterns, effects, and interventions relevant to abusive situations.
17. Hope is lived out as a plan of escape or survival is developed.
18. Hope is real because it is not a product of society.
19. Hope re-negotiates power.
20. Hope is real because it is based on self-worth, which reaches beyond cultural definitions and sex-linked roles.
21. Hope finds expression within a spirituality, which is based upon responsiveness to God.
22. Hope is to live within a covenant of mutual fidelity to one's own personhood, to others and to God.
23. Hope comes through God's invitation.
24. Hope for the abused is being integrated into this community of the people of God.

¹⁸ John Kie Vining, Maxine Gernert and Gail Lemmert, *Silent Suffering . . . Silent Shame* (Columbus: Christian Life Publications, 1999), 119-135.

Session Five

I. Devotions

II. Accepting Decisions Without Judging

III. How did Jesus respond to people¹⁹

1. Jesus had compassion (see Mark 8:2; 6:34).
2. Jesus accepted people (see John 4; 8; Luke 19).
3. Jesus gave people worth; he involved himself in the lives of people who were considered the worst of sinners.
4. Jesus met people's needs (see Luke 10; John 3).
5. Jesus used the right words (see Mark 3:5).
6. Jesus emphasized right behavior (see John 8:11; Luke 6:47).
7. Jesus sought to have people accept responsibility (see John 5:6; Mark 10:51).
8. Jesus encouraged people (see Matthew 11:28-30).
9. Jesus emphasized peace of mind (see John 14; 27).
10. Jesus helped reshape or refashion people's thinking (Luke 5:22-25; 12:22-27).
11. Jesus taught (see Luke 14:1-6; Luke 6:39,42).
12. Jesus spoke with authority (see Matthew 7:29).
13. Jesus admonished and confronted (see Mathew 8:26; 18:15)

¹⁹ H. Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling* (Ventura: Regal books, 1993), 43-47

IV. FACTORS IN THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JESUS' MINISTRY²⁰

1. Jesus was obedient to God (see John 12:49; 17:4).
2. Jesus lived a life of faith (see Mark 5).
3. Jesus lived a life of prayer (see Luke 5:15-16; 6:13,13).
4. Jesus spoke with authority (see Matthew 7:29).
5. Jesus was personally involved (see Jesus with his disciples).
6. Jesus had the power of the Holy Spirit (see Luke 3:21-22; 5:17).

ESTABLISHING A BIBLICAL COUNSELING PROCESS²¹

1. Building a relationship between helper and helpee (see John 16:7-13).
2. Exploring the problem, trying to clarify issues and determine what has been done in the past to tackle the problem.
3. Deciding on a course of action. There may be several possible alternatives that could be tried one at a time (see John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 2:13).
4. Stimulating action that helper and helpee evaluate together. When something doesn't work, try again (see John 16:13; Acts 10:19,20; 16:6).
5. Terminating the counseling relationship and encouraging the helpee to apply what he/she has learned as he/she launches out on his/her own (see Romans 8:14).

See Luke 24 where Jesus met with the two men on the road to Emmaus. This is a good illustration of how Jesus counseled. He asked questions, spent a lot of time listening, giving opportunity to express frustrations. He showed them love, confronted their misunderstanding of Scriptures (firm but gentle). He ate a meal with them. Then Jesus left them on their own and spurred them to action

²⁰ H. Norman Wright, *Crisis Counseling* (Ventura: Regal books, 1993), 47-49.

²¹ Ibid.

SESSION SIX

I. Devotions

II. Discussion on How To Network and Explore Options

III. LOOKING AT OUR OWN BIAS

Have the group look at their own bias by answering the following questions.

- (1) How do you feel about other races?
- (2) What race do you feel the most uncomfortable around?
- (3) How do you feel about church involvement?
- (4) Should anyone in the church be concerned with your private affairs? If so who?
- (5) What is your opinion concerning divorce?
- (6) What is your opinion concerning abortion?
- (7) Would you tell anyone if you were in an abusive relationship? Why or why not?
- (8) Would you go to a shelter if you were being abused?
- (9) What questions are you uncomfortable with people asking you?
- (10) Who do you trust?

Use the above questions to open up discussion and allow the flow of conversation to go wherever it may. What is talked about will be different for each group.

IV. WHAT IS TRANSFERENCE?

Transference is common to everyone due to the ways we learned to deal with the world. Everyone has some unresolved childhood conflicts that are beyond awareness. In order to remain in touch with our own unresolved conflicts we must stay in touch with reality as much as possible. The goal is to avoid superimposing personal needs and conflicts on the verbal and non-verbal messages we receive from others.

Transference in a counselor is referred to as countertransference. It is the counselor's transference of reactions to the counselee.

Example of this could be as follows. A person comes to see a minister and reveals that he/she spends money with no thought for tomorrow. As a minister you may have not been given many material things as a child because your mother spent money without planning on her children's needs. You may find yourself getting angry with this person because of the way he/she is spending money, since it reminds you of how you were hurt in your own childhood. Transference or countertransference is when a current experience of someone other than yourself is internalized because of your own experiences.

Ministers must consistently look inward for areas that need to be addressed. Ministers must also be accountable to one another. If you find yourself getting upset or having different emotions with someone it is a good idea to bring these issues up with someone else who is involved in the same type of ministering that you are. For the purpose of this training it would be helpful to be accountable to someone else in the group.

Another example could be hearing of a child being molested. If you have any unresolved issues of being molested yourself, you may find yourself with a range of emotions. There are times when it is better to refer than become a part of someone else's pain if you have yet to resolve your own issues.

V. RESOURCES – HOW TO FIND THEM

- Phonebooks
- Hotlines
- Friends
- Police Stations
- Hospitals
- Shelters
- Information
- Social Agencies
- Other Churches
- Self-help groups

Discuss different ways to gather information for a Resource Manual. Each participant should spend the next week gathering information for the Resource Manual being put together and prepared to come to the next session to share resources.

Make your own list of resources and what information you find out about each one.

Session Seven

I. Devotions

II. What Is The Church's Responsibility?

There is sometimes the temptation to disbelief. Many times respected members of the church are the ones abusing. They may be leaders, and if we admit that they are abusers we also have to admit that we have used bad judgment of character to place them in position.

There is sometimes the temptation to sympathize with the abuser. This is seen especially if the abuser seems to be repentant.

There is the temptation to blame the victim. There is a myth that if someone is abused it must be because of something that person has done. A victim should never be blamed for abuse.

There is the temptation to protect the reputation of the church. So much media is focused on churches these days, sometimes we think it may be better if nobody knows about this.

The worst response the church can give abusers is "cheap grace." Many times abusers continue to abuse because the church has told them too soon that he/she is forgiven without true repentance taking place and with no regard to the abused.

"When the church and its leadership are willing to hear a victim's disclosure of abuse, they're then called upon to intervene on behalf of the victim. The Hebrew tradition of hospitality is one mandate for action. The hospitality tradition called upon the community as a whole to protect the widow, the sojourner, and the orphan. These were the persons in the community who had the least resources and were most vulnerable to exploitation by

others...Both Hebrew and Christian traditions place heavy emphasis on justice as the proper response to injustice and harm done to others."²⁸

IV. WHAT SCRIPTURES ARE MISUSED?²²

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself, its Savior. (Eph. 5:22-23)

This means that there are times in a Christian marriage when a wife should give way to her husband and recognize his interests as well as her own. But the husbands' headship suggested here does not mean a role of unquestioned authority to which one is blindly obedient. What is described here is a model based on Christ's relationship to the church: Jesus was the servant of all who followed him, and he gave himself up for them. Never did he order people around, threaten, hit or frighten them.

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is right? But even if you do suffer for righteousness sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts reverence Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing right, if that would be God's will, than for doing wrong.

(1 Pet. 3:13-17 RSV)

What the writer is saying here is that when we stand up for what is right, as Martin Luther King Jr., did, we will probably be reviled and abused—we will suffer—and that God will bless us because our suffering has a purpose.

But the suffering of being abused in one's family is very different. It has no good purpose. It never brings forth a greater good. It is not God's will for our lives. To accept it as purposeful, as your cross to bear, as God's will for you, is to allow yourself to be a victim. You do not deserve to suffer abuse at the hands of a member of your family.

²⁸ Marie M. Fortune, *Violence in the Family: A Workshop Curriculum for Clergy and Other Helpers* (San Francisco: Pilgrim Press, 1991)

²² Marie M. Fortune, *Keeping the Faith* (San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1987).

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also. (Lk. 6:27-29 RSV)

Does this passage mean that we are to simply allow ourselves to be beaten and abused? Does Jesus expect us to become doormats? Is this the “good” we should do to the person that hates us?

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he discusses these ideas further and I think helps us to clarify the meaning:

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good...Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them...repay no one evil for evil...Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord”
(Rom. 12:9,14,17,19 RSV)

Jesus is trying to teach us that we should not act out of vengeance, that we should not seek to punish the one who harmed us by returning evil for evil. To turn the other cheek means that we do not return a blow for a blow. But we can walk away from it. He does not mean that we should lie down and allow someone to walk over us many times. There is nothing loving about allowing an abusive person to continue to destroy his family. Violence in the family is evil, and Paul clearly says that we should hate what is evil and try to bring it to an end.

And this again you do. You cover the Lord’s altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because (God) no longer regards the offering or accept it with favor at your hand. You ask, why does (God) not?” Because the Lord was witness to the covenant between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. Has not the one God made and sustained for us the spirit of life: And what does (God) desire? Godly offspring. So take heed to yourselves, and let none be faithless to the wife of his youth. “For I hate divorce.” Says the Lord the God of Israel, “and covering one’s garment with violence,” says the Lord of hosts. “So take heed to yourselves and do not be faithless.” (Mal. 2:13-16 RSV)

Here the prophet is challenging the faithlessness of a husband. During that period, frequently husbands would simply put out their wives through divorce, and for no reason except that they were tired of them. They had the right to divorce under the law, and they abused that right. This is the practice that Malachi is challenging.

We have always taught within the Christian tradition that adultery or sexual unfaithfulness breaks the marriage covenant in a marriage. The main reason that adultery is a problem is that it results in broken trust between husband and wife. If the promise is made to be monogamous, then adultery breaks that promise. But we should also realize that there are other kinds of unfaithfulness. Bringing violence into one's marriage is also unfaithfulness. Once violence has entered a relationship, trust is destroyed. If you can't trust your husband not to hit you, what can you trust?

What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.
(Matt. 19:6 RSV)

Any man who brings violence and abuse into his family life is putting asunder the marriage covenant that God has blessed. The violence is what breaks up the marriage and the one responsible for that violence is the one responsible for the breakup. The actual divorce is in fact only the public acknowledgment of the private truth that a marriage has been long since destroyed by abuse. So if there is a consideration on divorce, while it is a painful choice no matter what the circumstance, you are not taking steps to break up a marriage. Emotionally, that has already happened. You are taking steps to let other people know what has happened, to remove yourself and your children from a destructive situation, and to get on with your life.

V. SCRIPTURES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE²³

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.
(1 Cor. 3:16-17 RSV)

You are valued in God's eyes; God regards your whole self as a temple, a sacred place. Just as God does not want a temple defiled by violence, neither does God want you to be harmed. God's spirit dwells in you and makes you holy. You do deserve to live without fear and without abuse. The one who destroys God's temple stands in judgment before God.

²³ Marie M. Fortune, *Keeping the Faith* (San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1987).

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (Jn. 10:10 RSV)

Jesus is saying that some people come among us to hurt and destroy others. Many of our lives have met those kinds of people. Jesus brought something totally different from that. He came so that we might know fullness of life and feel safe and happy. Spiritual abundance is feeling safe and secure in your own home for yourself and your children. Battering is not God's will for your life.

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.
(Eph. 5:21 RSV)

This is the starting point for all our relationships as Christians, inside the family or outside. Here the words "be subject to" also mean "accommodate to" or "give way to". This means that we should all, including husbands and wives, seek to be flexible with each other and give way to each other.

Another passage for further clarification

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Phil. 2:4)

We should all be concerned with other's welfare as well as for our own.

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.
(Col. 3:19 RSV)

Clearly the emphasis Scripture places in instructing husbands to care for and respect their wives just as Christ did the church leaves no room for excusing a husband's violent and abusive behavior toward his wife.

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does (1 Cor. 7:3-4 RSV)

This clearly lays out the mutual rights and responsibilities for husband and wife in a sexual relationship, and they are exactly the same. Both have a right to expect sexual

activity with the other and both have a responsibility to respect the wishes of the other. In no way does this Scripture justify a husband's forcing his wife sexually. You have a right to say no to sexual demands if you are uncomfortable, uninterested, or frightened.

Many women say that their husbands force them to have sex immediately following a beating. Frequently, the husbands say that this is because they love their wives and want to make up after a fight. In fact, this forced sexual activity is just another kind of battering.

Sexual sharing between two people is one of God's greatest gifts to us. It is this gift that is celebrated in Scripture in the Song of Solomon. But what is necessary for sexual sharing to be a blessing between two people is that both people be fully consenting and that it take place in a context of respect, choice, and regard for each other's well being.

“Repent and turn to God and perform deeds worthy of their repentance” (Acts 26:20 RSV)

If your partner has truly repented and been converted, has genuinely turned to God, then he should perform acts worthy of his repentance. You should wait and watch for those acts; wait for him to no longer be abusive and controlling toward anyone. If his conversion is not genuine, if he is only using this as a way to manipulate you or the legal system or his counselor, then you do not have any obligation to respond to him. In 2 Timothy, Paul warns of such persons.

You must face the fact: the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles (People) will love nothing but money and self; they will be arrogant, boastful and abusive; with no respect for parents, no gratitude, no piety, no natural affection; they will be implacable in their hatreds, scandal-mongers, intemperate and fierce, strangers to all goodness, traitors, adventurers, swollen with self-importance. There will be (those) who put pleasure in the place of God (those) who preserve the outward form of religion, but are standing denial of its reality. Keep clear of (people) like these
(2 Tim. 3:1-5, New English Bible, emphasis added)

In other words, there are some persons who are abusive and hateful to others and yet who put on the façade of religion to cover up their true selves. God knows these persons and

knows what is really in their hearts god does not expect us to be gullible and to accept their religiosity at face value. If their actions in private are not consistent if they are abusive at home but at church are zealous converts, then they are presenting the outward form of religion but are denying its reality. Their conversion is a fraud. Do not be deceived by it.

Unfortunately, the physical abuse of children has been justified by some as Christian parenting. It is supported by misquoting Scripture, as in "Spare the rod and spoil the child," which in fact does not appear in Scripture at all. The verse that has been distorted actually reads:

He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. (Prov. 13:24 RSV)

The point of this proverb is to encourage parents to discipline children—that is, to guide and direct them. The rod was most frequently used by the shepherd in biblical times to protect and guide the sheep or to pull them out of dangerous places, not to beat them; hence the reference in Psalm 23 "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Beating children with a rod is not what was envisioned as good parenting. Good parenting is accomplished by guiding, directing, teaching, and protecting children. In addition, the writer of Ephesians cautions parents:

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:4 RSV)

Session Eight

I. Devotions

II. FINDING A WAY TO FORGIVE²⁴

Working your way through

Forgiving is possible. Not easily, not quickly, perhaps, but you can free yourself from the memory which brings such bitter sorrow—and in the process, heal the wound which has throbbed so long.

Forgiving is not a moment of tear-streaked reunion. It is a process. A journey of the heart. There is a guide for the journey, don't hurry yourself, there is no jet service to forgiveness.

Don't fall into the trap of making excuses for yourself; this is not an exercise in assigning blame. Be willing to try to forgive yourself as well.

Don't feel obligated to make excuses for the person who hurt you, either.
(Excusing and forgiving are not the same thing.)

Decide to forgive. Now that you have a clearer picture of what happened and why, face the moment of decision: Do you really want to forgive?

Not without reason do we speak of “nursing” a grudge—using a word, which connotes tender care and attention. Something in the human heart (some call it original sin) loves dark feelings. When anger and hatred have been in residence there for a long time, we grow used to having them around; we even grow to love them.

Something in the human heart wants justice. Forgiving when repentance or reparation is lacking, when real reconciliation is perhaps impossible because of distance, death, or the other's unwillingness—that kind of forgiving rightfully outrages our sense of justice. Some things don't, in decent human terms, deserve forgiveness.

Forgiving is not something you do for someone else. It is not even something you do because you should, according to the standards of religious belief or human decency. Forgiving is something you do for yourself.

²⁴ Carol Luebering, *Carenotes* (St. Meinrad: Abbey Press, 1989).

It is one way of becoming the person you were created to be—and fulfilling God's dream of you is the only way to true wholeness and happiness.

You need to forgive so that you can move forward with life. An unforgiving injury binds you to a time and place someone else has chosen; it holds you trapped in a past moment and in old feelings. Forgiveness is your ticket to freedom.

Write down what difference forgiving will make in your life, what will you gain—and what will you lose?

Are you willing to lose company of your dark feelings? Have you the courage to step out into the future without carrying the all-too-familiar weight?

REMEMBER

Remembering is clearly a painful task. Be gentle with yourself; take it in small steps if you must. If the old hatred surges, treat it as you would an unruly child: Acknowledge its presence but make it sit in a corner while you get this important work done. Write down your recollections so that you can pick up where you left off if you need to back off for awhile, and so you can continue to fill in the details bit by bit. Review the consequences. Besides the obvious loss—the shattered relationship, the material setback—take careful inventory of the losses you may not have named before: the changes inside you. Did you lose some ability to trust, to be happy, loving individual? What part of yourself, amputated by that old injury, would you like to rediscover?

TRY TO UNDERSTAND

Once you have recalled the injury in all its awful detail, unleash your gift of insight. Try to understand why things happened as they did. Bit by bit let go of the bitter feelings you have nursed so long. You may miss them at first, but you will discover that they were pretty unpleasant company after all.

Ask for divine help in your struggle to forgive. The God of the Judeo-Christian tradition has an ancient reputation for compassion and mercy. Try praying for your enemy. Don't just ask for a change in that person's heart or behavior; really pray for him or her. You may find it hard to find words for such a prayer, but words are not necessary to the

God who knows your mind and heart. Just stand before God with that person at your side, and let God's love wash over both of you until it penetrates your heart.

The actual moment of forgiveness probably won't come as a sudden rush of warm feelings. You may not even notice when it happens. But one day you may find yourself really wishing well to the person who hurt you or suddenly realize that you haven't thought of the old injury for weeks. Then you will know you have reached the journey's end. Forgiving can be a long road indeed but at its end lies freedom and new life.

III. ROLE PLAYS

Give participants questions and statements of which to respond by acting out short role-plays. The participants should not know ahead of time what the questions or statements will be. The purpose of this exercise is to bring more awareness of what may or may not be behind certain questions or statements that come to them.

1. Do you believe that women should always submit to their husband?
2. My children need counseling and I don't know where to go.
3. Can you pray with me about a family situation?
4. I may need to go to the hospital; I think my arm may be broken.
5. I think I may want to divorce my husband and I don't know who to talk to.
6. Our family is probably not like other families in this church.
7. I don't really have any friends, my husband is real funny about who I talk to.
8. My husband had a bad childhood, but I know he loves me.
9. Would you call the pastor or the police if you were in danger?
10. Sometimes I think I would be better off dead.

IV. Assessment for Domestic Violence Post-Training Questionnaire

Your responses will help to determine what components of the training and curriculum are necessary to promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. In order to facilitate this I need to collect data from you concerning your experiences and knowledge in domestic violence. Your participation in the questionnaire is voluntary but greatly needed. All responses will be kept confidential. Your responses and suggestions will ultimately be used to help improve the Domestic Violence Training for future participants. Thank you for your participation in this project.

1. Define domestic violence.
2. What is your current knowledge of domestic violence?
3. Why do you think domestic violence occurs?
4. What measures of any can be taken to prevent domestic violence, if any?
5. How might you know if a person is a victim of domestic violence?
6. Do you think a victim should stay in a relationship if he/she is being abused? Why or why not?
7. What does Scripture have to say about domestic violence?
8. What do you think the church's response should be to domestic violence?
9. List three things you learned from this training.

Recommend two things that would improve this training.

Survey Questions for Domestic Violence

Your responses will help promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this survey is voluntary but greatly needed. All responses will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation in this project.

You may use the back of this paper for more space.

1. Have you been involved in a relationship that involved domestic violence?
Yes _____ No _____
2. How many? _____
3. How long did the relationship(s) last?
4. What was the outcome of the relationship?
5. What help, if any, did you seek while you were in this relationship?
6. From whom, if anyone, did you seek help?
7. Were you involved with any religious groups?
8. To whom would you refer someone who is in an abusive relationship?

STORYTELLING

Your story will help promote ministry interaction for victims of domestic violence. Your participation in this storytelling is voluntary but greatly needed. All stories will be kept confidential. Thank you for your participation in this project.

Our experiences shape our lives and our relationships. Writing your experiences can help you not only narrate your experiences but also help you to navigate through the healing process of the journey. Please use this exercise to write about your experience in domestic violence in whatever way you may choose to share

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APPENDIX E
TIMELINE FOR MINISTRY MODEL

| DATES | TIMELINE FOR MINISTRY MODEL |
|----------------|--|
| January 2004 | Form group of Professional Associates |
| February 2004 | Form group of Context Associates |
| March 2004 | Meet with Professional Associates to discuss ministry model |
| March 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to discuss project and research needed |
| April 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to define goals and objectives |
| April 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to discuss questionnaires |
| May 2004 | Meet with Professional Associates to discuss further development of questionnaires and Biblical Foundation paper |
| May 2004 | Call Church of God International Ministry of Care in regards to how the Church of God has dealt with abuse in the past |
| June 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to discuss surveys and storytelling. |
| June 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to discuss further development of questionnaires and Biblical Foundation paper. |
| July 2004 | Meet with Associate Director of Praise Chapel to discuss scheduling of training sessions |
| July 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to discuss letter for participants |
| August 2004 | Meet with investigator at Detroit Police Station |
| August 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to facilitate resources with shelters for victims of domestic violence |
| September 2004 | Start work on Historical Foundation Paper |
| September 2004 | Meet with Professional Associates to discuss training and papers |
| October 2004 | Review and refine surveys and curriculums with Professional Associates |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| November 2004 | Meet with Professional Associates to discuss project for candidacy review |
| November 2004 | Meet with Professional Associates to discuss methodology |
| December 2004 | Attend Candidacy Review |
| December 2004 | Meet with Context Associates to send letter out for participants |
| December 2004 | Meet with Associate Director to discuss participants |
| January 2005 | Begin training laity |
| January 2005 | Discuss with Context Associates the results of the pre questionnaires |
| February 2005 | Review surveys questions with Professional Associates |
| February 2005 | Complete Survey Questions |
| March 2005 | Complete training of laity |
| March 2005 | Meet with Context Associates to discuss field experience |
| April 2005 | Review methodology and field experience with Professional Associates |
| April 2005 | Work on Chapter Six |
| May 2005 | Start Chapter One and Two |
| May 2005 | Focus on theological part of paper |
| June 2005 | Work on Dissertation |
| July 2005 | Submit Dissertation |
| August 2005 | Defend Dissertation |

APPENDIX F
PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATES AND CONTEXT ASSOCIATES

List of Professional Associates

Ned Adams, D.Min., Professor of Ashland Theological Seminary

Sharon Marshall, D.Min., Professor of Ashland Theological Seminary

Jerrolynn Johnson, Ph.D., Director of Counseling Program at Ashland Theological
Seminary
Chicago, Illinois

Sharon Ellis, D. Min.

John Kie Vining, D. Min., Director of Counseling at The Church of God Center for
Ministerial Care and the Coordinator of. Family Ministries for
the Church of God

List of Context Associates

Montique Brown

Cindy Goins

Jody Holbrook

Michelle LaPratt

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